

# RELIGION IN LIFE

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# The Churches Shift on War

ROLAND H. BAINTON

VERY significant shifts have taken place within recent years in the attitudes of Christian groups to the morality of participation in war. The Catholics have been moving toward the Quakers, the Quakers toward the monks, and the Calvinists toward the Lutherans. Such a statement calls for a preliminary exposition of the traditional stands of these bodies, and this in turn requires an initial account of the major Christian answers to the problem of taking life in war.

## I

Broadly speaking, the history of Christianity exhibits three attitudes toward war: the first is one of nonparticipation, pacifism; the second of reluctant participation, the just and mournful war; the third of hearty participation, the crusade. All three draw their inspiration alike from the New Testament, the Old Testament and from classical antiquity; but in the main pacifism makes its primary appeal to the New Testament, the crusade to the Old Testament, and the just war to the classical ethic, especially of Stoicism. All three attitudes are possible for Christians because the Gospels do not settle the question and the proof texts commonly adduced in favor of each position are not sufficiently explicit to exclude the others. Pacifists rely on the Sermon on the Mount, but the difficulty here is that the precepts on nonresistance are set in the framework of private ethics. Only the injunction to love enemies has to do with public relations, and in this instance the problem remains open whether love and constraint at the point of killing are compatible. The crusader appeals to the expulsion by Jesus of the money changers from the temple, but no weapon is mentioned save in the Fourth Gospel only, the whip of cords, which, if it be authentic, is scarcely a bayonet. The just war relies on the texts in favor of civil government such as "render unto Caesar" (Mark 12:7) and "be subject under the higher powers" (Romans 13:2), but the use of these texts for the *justum bellum* rests on the analogy between war and civil government which is more than dubious. All three of these positions, then, have some basis in the New Testament, but none has an unassailable and exclusive claim.

The reason is that the New Testament was not concerned to legislate for all contingencies. What we do find is an enunciation of general principles and specific applications to the situation of that time only, not of all time, nor of our time. The New Testament inculcates an attitude of love without stint directed toward the evil as well as toward the good, a quality of mercy patterned after the mercy of God. The New Testament paints a picture of peace transcending anything in Hebrew and classical antiquity. Peace is not simply the opposite of war, but of all contention. It is not outward merely, but also inward; not negative only, but positive, dynamic, creative. This peace is the principle of harmony, the bond of all human associations. But whether love can constrain, whether peace may use the sword in her own defense, here are the questions unanswered. In a specific instance Jesus disapproved of war. He could not endorse the zealot rebellion against Rome, but His reasons may have been prudential, inasmuch as insurrection was foredoomed. His attitude in this particular case, therefore, does not preclude the possibility that He might have condoned some other war with a different objective and a better chance of success. The three positions, then, have each a toehold, but not an exclusive foothold in the New Testament.

## II

They were elaborated in the course of the centuries, first pacifism, then the just war and then the crusade. The period from Christ to Constantine was marked by pacifism; the interval from Constantine to the barbarian invasions witnessed the emergence of the just war; the Middle Ages added the crusade.

The pacifist period was one in which at first the problem of war was not acute. The Roman Peace was not seriously menaced, military service was not generally compulsory, and the civilian was under no pressure to volunteer. The question arose only in case a soldier already in the army was converted, and even then the situation was ambiguous because the army did the police work of the Empire. Hence some Christians made a distinction between a permissible service in peace time and an illegitimate service in war time. The presence of Christians in the ranks between wars does not, therefore, of necessity demonstrate an approval of war. On the other hand, their absence from the armies need not have been due to pacifism, since there were other motives for abstention, inasmuch as Christians, being persecuted, held aloof from many areas of life, and even in

periods of religious toleration military service was difficult to dissociate from pagan worship.

Yet when all the qualifications are in, the fact remains that no churchman, whose works are extant, condoned Christian participation in warfare until after the age of Constantine. Coupled with an increasing evidence of the presence of Christians in the army is an increasing literature of protest. An outsider, Celsus, the pagan critic of Christianity, toward the end of the second century charged that "if all men were to do the same as you, there would be nothing to prevent the king from being left in utter solitude and desertion, and the forces of the Empire would fall into the hands of the wildest and most lawless barbarians." The Church Father, Origen, in his reply did not deny the accusation of pacifism, but contested only the assumed consequences.

The grounds for such nonparticipation are generally discovered by historians, who do not approve of it, in motives of a very ephemeral validity: in the belief of the early Christians that the world was destined to a speedy end, and in an attitude of pessimism and rigorism inspired by persecution and far in excess of anything in the New Testament. These, however, are not the motives assigned by the Church Fathers themselves. The avowed grounds of their pacifism are love, legalism and optimism. The spirit of love was taken by them to exclude war. "If we are enjoined to love our enemies, whom have we to hate? If injured, we are forbidden to retaliate. Who, then, can suffer injury at our hands?" "If you enroll as one of God's people, heaven is your country and God your lawgiver, and what are His laws? . . . Thou shalt not kill. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Christians do not learn war any more, for they have become the sons of peace." They cannot regard "homicide as a crime when committed by an individual, as a virtue when carried on publicly." Running through all these passages is the incompatibility of love and war.

Added to this general consideration was an appeal sometimes to legalism, sometimes to optimism. The first is absolutist and has no regard for consequences; the second is utilitarian. The legalist says: "Christ has laid down the law. In disarming Peter, He disarmed every soldier. We cannot strike, no matter what happens." But the optimist argues that in the long run nonviolence is the superior technique for the maintenance of order, the establishment of justice and the preservation of peace. This

was the reply of Origen to Celsus, who had charged that if all men were Christians the empire would fall into the hands of the barbarians. Origen retorted, to begin with, that if all men were Christians, the barbarians would be Christians. He could not conceive of a genuine conversion of the Roman Empire without a parallel effort and success among the barbarians, and even while the Christians were a minority, he looked upon them as the preservative of the empire. Rome had achieved only an external peace by suppressing war. Christianity had introduced an inward and dynamic peace, a spirit of concord taming wild passions and rendering men fit and able to live together. Christian love, Christian labor and Christian prayers were doing more in his judgment than arms to preserve Rome, and the winsome Word of God incarnate in Jesus, he believed, would go on to ever more abundant conquests of the minds of men.

### III

The pacifist position, however, was rapidly moving toward the just and mournful war. Christianity itself became the object of war in the two decades of civil dissension leading up to the sole authority of Constantine. As many as seven contestants at one time struggled for the imperial title, and each, to curry favor with one element or another of the population, promised either to tolerate or to persecute the new faith. Little wonder that the sympathies of Christians gravitated to their protectors and that prayers went up for the success of their arms. The next step was Christian participation in warfare, which marked the period from Constantine to the barbarian invasions. The older inhibitions were not surrendered at once, nor ever completely. If by the end of the fourth century Theodosius had decreed that only Christians could be soldiers, the Church still enjoined penance for bloodshed in war, and the monks arose to perpetuate a complete pacifism among a limited group.

The first churchman to justify Christian participation in war was St. Ambrose. He was a true Roman trained in the imperial employ before he became a bishop. He was steeped in the classics, and his treatise on Christian morals was a free reworking of a treatise by Cicero. St. Ambrose began the appropriation of the classical theme of the just war. But the great formulator of the doctrine was St. Augustine, who laid down the essential lines of the Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican positions. He was confronted with a frightful situation. The barbarians were already in Spain and the refugees were pouring into his native Africa. Boniface,

the Commander of the Legions, having lost his wife, desired to become a monk. "For God's sake not now," exclaimed Augustine, and then set himself to explain both why God had suffered the barbarians to break in and why Christians should nevertheless resist their further advance. The ultimate explanation is a somber view of history. The optimism of Origen is gone. Man is a fallen being, who has well-nigh obliterated in himself the image of God in which he was created. The Roman Empire was founded on the fratricide of Romulus and grew by rapine. The conversion of Constantine brought an improvement, but not even conversion, whether of an empire or of an individual, produces perfection. This is possible only in the life to come. The corollary is that peace will never be obtained on earth. Nevertheless outrageous villainy can be restrained, To that end the sword of the magistrate is ordained. In making war, the prince is acting as a magistrate.

Not any war is legitimate for a Christian, but only the just war. It must be waged under the authority of the prince who determines its justice. The common soldier is not in a position to solve, and is not bound to raise the question. The war must be just as to its object, which is to punish injustice and restore peace. It must be just in its intention—that is, without vindictiveness; and just in its conduct—no wanton violence. For the prince and the soldier the Sermon on the Mount is conserved only as an inner disposition. Outward resistance is conjoined with inward love. At the same time nonresistance is reserved for private relations, and the civilian must not defend even his own life. He is permitted to use the sword only under the authority of the prince. The clergy and the monk are entirely exempt from military participation. Here, then, is a graded ethic: for public, private and ecclesiastical relations. One point of very great significance must be noted, namely, that for Augustine, unlike Cicero, a war can be just on one side only. He is the father of the war guilt theory.

The war then is just. It is also mournful, for no Christian can feel happy at the taking of life, whether as executioner or soldier. In an imperfect world men, mindful of their own imperfection, must wield the sword of a justice all too relative in its quality. They will do so only with heaviness of heart.

The theory of the just war was elaborated in the Middle Ages. During the predatory raids of an unsettled society the recovery of property was added as one of the objects of the just war. The number of non-

combatants was increased to include not only women, children and the clergy, but also travelers, merchants and farmers. A utilitarian note was introduced when a reasonable chance of success was made one of the conditions of the just war, but the most notable development was the implementation of the idea by a machinery for the determination of justice in the courts of the Church and through the arbitrament of the Pope. The papacy of the thirteenth century came closer to realizing the idea of the League of Nations and the Permanent Court of Justice than has any other institution before or since.

#### IV

At the same time the Middle Ages saw the rise of the third attitude, that of the crusade. The initial ingredient in the crusading idea was furnished by the infusion of new blood. The barbarians were a warlike folk, and though the missionaries might decline to translate for them the books of Kings in the Old Testament, the marauders were ingenious enough to turn the New Testament into a warrior's manual. The first Christian poem in the German language celebrates the exploit of the doughty knight St. Peter, who wielded his broad sword and clave clean the ear of Malchus. King Clovis, of the Franks, transformed Jesus into a tribal war god. The pacifism of early Christianity was utterly incomprehensible to these lusty folk.

The second step toward a crusade was a great peace movement. In the eleventh century the Church made a valiant effort to curb feudal anarchy by restricting the scope of war. Princes should take a pledge to refrain from molesting an ever-enlarging circle of noncombatants. This was the Peace of God. The next move was to limit the time of hostilities. The taboo applied to holy days in such number that scarcely a quarter of the year remained for warfare. This was the Truce of God. It was none too successful, and then a league was made to enforce the peace. Here was the germ of the crusading idea. Unhappily the peace army got out of hand and another had to be raised for its suppression. The Church despaired of curbs upon war. More feasible would be a diversion of bellicose propensities. If the knights must fight, let them cease devouring one another and turn rather against the enemies of the Church, the enemies of the faith.

The great speech in which Urban II summoned France to the First

Crusade was a peace speech. He started off with all those exhortations to leave off mutual destruction which had characterized the sermons of the peace crusade, but he concluded with a call to arms and the assembly cried *Deus Vult*. The crusade differed in several respects from the just and mournful war. It was fought, to begin with at least, under the authority of the Church rather than of the prince. Secondly, the common soldier had to volunteer. He took the cross and thus had more personal responsibility for judging the cause. In the third place, the spirit was far from mournful. All qualms were erased. This was a holy cause in which to kill was to benefit Christ; to die was to gain salvation. Finally clerical and monastic exemption broke down and three new orders, the Templars, the Hospitalers and the Teutonic Knights, combined militarism with monasticism. Differences of opinion among the theologians arose as to whether the object of the crusade was to convert the infidel or simply to punish and restrain him from molesting pilgrims, encroaching on the eastern empire and holding the Holy Sepulcher, which objects could be squared with the formula of the just war. The latter was the prevailing view, but however much the language of the just war was retained, the spirit was different.

A reaction set in. Many criticisms were leveled at the crusades, though few were strictly pacifist. Some objected to shipping the scum of Europe to the Holy Land; others upbraided the financial abuses. Some considered the enterprise ill-starred and preferred to pasture their cows or court Nicolette. A few, especially among the Franciscans, contrasted the bloodthirstiness of the crusades with the meekness of the gospel. In the wake of the crusades some minor pacifist movements arose. The Abigenses refused even to kill a chicken, and the Bohemian Brethren repudiated war.

## V

The Protestant Reformation continued the process of dissolution by wrecking the unity of the medieval church. Protestantism itself further divided, and different groups supported the three attitudes to war. The Lutherans and Anglicans adopted the just war; the Calvinists the crusade; left-wing groups, such as Mennonites and Quakers, were pacifist. The older positions were modified naturally in certain respects.

Luther's position can be described as that of Augustine all over again minus monasticism and with a strong aversion to crusades. Luther be-

lieved in war against the Turks, but not under the auspices of the Church, and certainly not in the name of Christ. The Turk should be restrained, not because he was an infidel or a polygamist, but because he had encroached upon the territory of European states. A Christian prince would be equally resisted were he to do the same thing. The war against the Turks was thus a war of defense to be waged under the authority of the prince.

The common soldier could fight without peril to his salvation, yet not lightheartedly, for war is, after all, a concession to the depravity of man. If all the world were Christian there would be no war. Christians have no need of the sword for their own protection since they are as sheep. But inasmuch as the majority of mankind act like tigers, the Christian, out of love for his neighbor, must assist in providing that protection which the non-Christian is not willing to forego. The conduct of the war must be free from barbarism, and the Christian must always preserve love in his heart. One recognizes the familiar Augustinian lines.

The main difference is that no class of men is set aside to exemplify the ideal of peace. The clergy, to be sure, do not bear muskets, yet they do assist in war, for their role is to curse. The monastery for Luther was completely eliminated, and the nearest functional substitute was the home. Here there is no mine or thine; here all the tender virtues find their scope. But the cleavage between private and public morality is thereby intensified, and the resultant type is that of a Bismarck, practicing the Sermon on the Mount at home and *Realpolitik* in the office.

The purveyor of the crusading idea in Protestantism was to be primarily Calvinism, though Lutheranism for a time veered in that direction because any revolution on behalf of religion against the constituted authorities tends to become a crusade. The just war theory of fighting under the authority of the prince is scarcely tenable when the revolt is actually directed against the prince. Three devices have been employed by way of harmonization. The first is to say that the revolt is not really against the prince, but only against his evil counselors. This was at first the contention of the English Puritans in their struggle with Charles I. The second is to say that the prince by tyranny has forfeited his position and may be resisted as a private citizen. This is the doctrine of tyrannicide. The third rests on a theory of constitutional government and distributed sovereignty. If the prince violates the constitution he may be resisted by

some other organ of government which equally is ordained of God to bear the sword.

The political situation in Germany in Luther's day lent itself readily to this device because the country was in a transitional period. The Holy Roman Empire was enfeebled, though far from extinct, and the centralized national state had not yet arisen as in Spain, France and England. A goodly number of mutually independent princes and free cities acknowledged the tenuous overlordship of the Holy Roman Emperor. The question was whether he might be resisted if he undertook to exterminate Protestantism. Luther was very hesitant on the point until the jurists convinced him that the emperor was a constitutional monarch who might be resisted by the princes since they were even more indubitably ordained of God through hereditary right than he who ruled only by election. Thus arose a doctrine destined to have an enormous vogue that the higher magistrate might be resisted by the lower, identified in Germany with the princes, in France with the nobles, in England with parliament. The theory was convenient in Germany during the Smalcald war, but lost its relevance when the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 accorded toleration to Lutheranism in designated areas.

Calvinism then became the purveyor of the idea. Calvin himself, to be sure, had much the same reservations as had Luther at first. Calvin declared that he would rather see the Reform wiped out than that it should survive through revolution, but hardier spirits, like Beza and Knox, justified not only revolt, but even tryannicide. The struggle became acute in France where the theory of the lower versus the higher magistrate was applied to the resistance of the Huguenot nobility to the crown. Wars of religion devastated the land for three decades, where religious fanaticism extinguished the gentler virtues. A similar spirit fired British Calvinists. Here Cromwell's men issued a "Soldier's Bible," in which "love of enemies" was subordinated to "Doe not I hate them O Lord that hate thee? .... I hate them with an unfained hatred, as they were mine utter enemies." American Calvinists transplanted the same mood to the wilderness where the red men were the Amalekites whom Jehovah had given to the sword.

The Calvinist crusade differs formally from that of the Middle Ages in that it was not fought under the auspices of the Church, though this made little difference since appeal was made to the will and glory of God. Monastic military orders were, of course, out of the question, but

the discipline of the monasteries was maintained by the Ironsides. The volunteer element was the same; Cromwell desired only the godly in his army. Particularly the absence of all qualms of conscience in the holy war is the persistent characteristic of this type.

## VI

Pacifism is represented by such groups as the Mennonites and Quakers. The incompatibility of love and war is stressed by them all, but the Mennonites make more of legalism and separatism; the Quakers more of optimism and utilitarianism. The Mennonites recognize the state as ordained of God for the ungodly and to be administered by the ungodly. The Christian should pay taxes, but should not act as a magistrate, let alone as a soldier. The Quakers, however, have been of all pacifist groups the least aloof from political life. They sat in the Pennsylvania legislature until the French and Indian War and have frequently been represented in the British House of Commons. Like the Calvinists they regard the state as divinely ordained for something more than the mere restraint of evil and have been willing to co-operate in the making and administration of all remedial legislation. They do not object to the use of force when subject to the restraints of orderly government, but deny the validity of the analogy between government and war, where the determination of justice rests with the contestants themselves. Quakers have commonly protested against capital punishment and are very critical of resort to the sword because it is a carnal weapon inconsistent with reliance upon the Spirit, not only as a source of divine guidance, but also as a means of restraining evil. They believe in the power of love to overcome at last all that is contrary to itself. Hence their pacifism can be described as a long-term utilitarianism. They are not so naïve as to suppose that if they turn the other cheek it will never be hit, but they do believe that ultimately love will triumph. Of all pacifist groups they are probably the most inclined to respect Christian warriors. Too many Quakers came out of Cromwell's army to be willing to disclaim the disinterestedness of their former zeal or to dispute the sincerity of friends still in the ranks.

One sees thus how close is pacifism to crusading. The objects are the same; the hopefulness of achieving something on earth is the same. Only the means differ. Perhaps that is why these two attitudes have been most characteristic of American Christianity. The obvious reason, of

course, is the transplantation in force of Calvinists to New England and of pacifists to Pennsylvania, whereas the representatives of the just war were comparatively few. In addition the exhilaration of the frontier inspired the dream of Holy Commonwealths to be planted with or without the sword. A certain oscillation is observable in our history according as one method failed and recourse was had to the other.

The main lines of the traditional attitudes were still intact in the North during the Civil War. The crusading spirit was exemplified by those who fought the war to free the slaves. Among them were the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Unitarians and Universalists. Pacifism was represented by the Quakers, Mennonites, Brethren, and the like, who wanted to free the slaves as much as the crusaders and abetted the underground railway, but shrank from the sword. The just war theory was maintained by those who fought to preserve the Union. The Catholics, Lutherans and the Episcopalians took the view that the constituted authority ordained by God had been assailed by a rebellion which must be put down, because we are "subject unto the higher powers."

## VII

During the first World War all save resolute pacifists swung to the crusading position. Since that time the traditional lines have been breaking down. The Catholics have been moving toward the Quakers, the Quakers toward the monks and the Calvinists toward the Lutherans.

The Catholics have been moving toward the Quakers without abandoning the formula of the just war. The point is rather that modern war is incompatible with the traditions of the just war as laid down by such theologians as Thomas Aquinas. Perhaps this is only another way of saying that Catholicism is incompatible with modern life (which is not to condemn Catholicism). Franziskas Stratmann (*The Church and War*, 1928), remarks that "the old teaching of St. Augustine, and the Thomists, supported by Suarez and Bellarmin, may seem strangely out of place in the world of today, fit only for the cloister from which it came—so much the worse for the world!" One by one he examines the conditions of the just war to see whether they are realizable under modern conditions. Sole guilt? If one take into account the long antecedents of war, where will this be found? Exemption of noncombatants? Poison gas is not discrim-

inating. A reasonable chance of success in vindicating justice? When one considers the millions of the innocent who are engulfed in the punishment of the guilty, can the end be achieved? A similar position was taken in 1933 by John K. Ryan (*Modern War and Basic Ethics*).

The Rev. Cyprian Emmanuel in a pamphlet called *The Ethics of War*, written for the Catholic Association for International Peace (1932), concludes: "It is becoming ever more difficult to find all the conditions [of the just war] verified simultaneously in any given case. And in few, if any, modern wars have they been observed; nor has even an honest attempt to observe them been made by the nations that initiated hostilities. It is particularly the growing brutality of modern warfare and the comparative ease with which unbiased arbitration can be had in practically all instances that render the justification of war so difficult at the present time."

Obviously all this does not mean that the Catholic Church as an institution nor that many Catholics as individuals are joining the Quakers, but there is certainly a growing appreciation of the grounds for declining to participate if not in all war, then at any rate in all modern war.

Coincidentally the Quakers have been moving toward the monks. That is to say, they are coming to think of themselves as a group with a vocation, with a special task which will not and cannot be undertaken by the community as a whole. (Compare Trueblood in the *Atlantic*, December, 1940, and more particularly the article, "Vocational Christian Pacifism," *Christianity and Crisis*, November 3, 1941.) The Quaker would prefer that all should be as he. In that respect he differs from the monk, who has been known, like St. Augustine, to urge Boniface, the general, to remain and discharge his tasks in the world. The Quaker would like to see all men adopt his way, but he knows that they will not, and that being so he would prefer to have them fight than that they should connive with evil. So long as England and France had not repudiated the military method they would have been on higher moral ground to have prevented the Italian appropriation of Ethiopia, than while emulating Pilate's washing of hands. (Bertram Pickard, "Peacemakers' Dilemma," *Pendle Hill Pamphlet*, No. 16.)

But if the Quaker takes this attitude, he must withdraw from politics, certainly in wartime. If he believes that those who are willing to go to war ought to fight rather than connive with injustice, he has no business to hinder military appropriations by adverse votes or lobbying. Those

who are committed to war must not be hampered from doing it effectively. The Quaker must withdraw to whatever moral equivalent he can discover for the monastery. He tries to find it in constructive work for the victims of war and of social inequality.

While he cannot participate actively in what others are doing, yet he recognizes that they, too, are working toward ends which are also his. Much as the Catholic Church looks to the prince to suppress disorder and to the monk to exemplify the way of peace, the Quaker believes that the use of force even in war can be in some measure disciplined for moral ends and that after a tortuous course some sort of justice can be achieved. The Quakers were able to respect a Lincoln as he respected them. Functionally this is very close to the Catholic solution.

Finally the Calvinists have been moving toward the Lutheran position, which is another way of saying that crusading is gone. We are left only with pacifists and mournful warriors. Despite the fact that aggression is this time so much more brutal than before, we are all so chastened by our own previous failures that no one now is repeating the remark of R. H. Tawney in 1917: "Either a war is a crusade or it is a crime; there is no half-way house." The word which is most common today is not "holy" but "grim." ("American Preaching in Wartime—I," Federal Council, *Information Service*, June 6, 1942.) This is a war without music. Those who like John Bennett (*Christian Century*, October 8, 1941), call it just will not call it holy. "Much that is holy is at stake in this war." We ought "to do all that we can to defeat the Nazi power." But neither of these statements means that this is a holy war. The war cannot be called holy because so much unholiness is mixed with it. The war can be called just despite the mingled injustice, because justice is at a lower level than holiness. Whether in the end this war can "be regarded as just in the light of its results may depend in large part upon the refusal of Christians to call it a holy war now," since those who fight a holy war are so imbued with righteous hate that they cannot make a stable peace.

Many like Bennett, very many, indeed, in Britain and in the United States, formerly either crusaders or pacifists, have now become mournful warriors. All this may leave us unsettled and confused, but at least there is this ground for hope that the churches are facing the problem with openness of mind and heaviness of heart.

## The Lord of Life

EDMUND D. SOPER

**W**HAT'S in a name?" Often very little with us; usually very much in days gone by. Dr. Duncan Black Macdonald reminds us that it would be well if we made a collection of the names or titles by which Jesus has been known and use them frequently. As a student of Islamic religion he had come to realize how important the use of the names of Allah has been from the beginning of Islam down to the present day. The Moslem has a collection of The Ninety-nine Most Beautiful Names of God which enter deeply into his devotional life. He has his rosary of ninety-nine beads which he tells as he passes from name to name. Each name brings to his mind some quality or attribute of his God Allah, that he is One, Living, Self-subsisting, Eternal, First, Last, Seen, Hidden, Glorious, Serene, Holy, Powerful, Exalted, Creator, Life Giver, Watchful, Judge, Avenger, Knower, Wise, Light, Guide, Generous, Provider, Protector, Beneficent, Merciful, Pardoner, Indulgent, Loving, and so on through the ninety and nine. At the beginning of each of the one hundred and fourteen (save one) Suras, or chapters, of the Koran is the famous Bismillah, "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful."

"What's in a name?" There may be very much, if it is not simply a designation used for the purpose of identification, but a description of some quality which the bearer of the name possesses. Then it glows with significance and carries a meaning to the mind and heart of the worshiper. We have not made use of names as we might have done in Christianity. This is not due, however, to the fact that we do not have such names. We have them in abundance. Only a little thought brings them back to our minds, one after another. The very name "Christ" was originally not a name at all but a title, the Greek form of the Hebrew Messiah, the Anointed. By usage we have attached it so closely to the given name Jesus that it has become a part of the name itself and we use it with no other thought. The name "Jesus" itself is full of meaning. In the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel the record is that the angel said to Joseph: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins" (v. 21). From this we have the name "Saviour," one of the most dearly beloved of all.

It is not difficult to go farther. Jesus Christ is at one and the same time Lord and Master, Saviour and Redeemer, Healer and Comforter; He is both Advocate and Judge; we think of Him as Prophet, Priest and King. It is not at all unlikely that the declaration of Paul, "We preach Christ Jesus as Lord" (II Corinthians 4:5) is the first statement of a Christian creed. The Old Testament is rich in names which we apply to Jesus. Each has its contribution to make to the fullness of our conception of His nature and worth. The magnificent paean of praise of the Coming One in Isaiah leaps instantly to mind: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be on his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6). These are not just designations, but descriptions intended to convey information and lift the mind to contemplation of truths thus presented. The Oriental mind delights in all of this and kindles to the truth imbedded in each title as a message most beautifully enshrined.

We are frequently not aware of our riches in Christianity until we have them before us. Collections of names have been made from time to time. I have one before me now, with a hundred and four titles in the list! We may think of Jesus Christ as Alpha and Omega, Author and Finisher of our faith, Author of eternal salvation, Bread of God, Bread of Life, Cornerstone of our faith, Day-spring, Day-star, Desire of all nations, First and Last, Heir of all things, Holy One, Image of God, Just One, Lamb of God, Light of the World, Living Stone, Lord of Glory, Mediator, Morning Star, Prince of Life, Ruler of Israel, Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, Son of God, the Only-begotten Son, the Truth, the Vine, the Way, the Word of God. (See full list in *Helps to the Study of the Bible*, second edition, Oxford University Press, 1931.)

There is still another name which may well be emphasized. It is known, yet not frequently used. It has in it a wealth of meaning which is likely to escape us, but which in our day we neglect at the price of failure to recognize one of the most meaningful aspects of the work and teaching of Jesus. It is the title the Lord of Life. Our purpose here is to call attention to this name, attempting to see what it has to show of Jesus' outlook and what it does to differentiate His religion from that of a number of other great religious leaders and founders.

This title does not occur as such in our scriptures. That may be the

chief reason why it has not been used more frequently, but the idea is so involved in the whole meaning of Christianity that it always lies near the surface. It is a favorite idea in the Johannine literature; in fact, Life is one of the key words of the Fourth Gospel. At the beginning the statement is made, "In him was life; and the light was the life of men" (1:4), and in the first epistle, "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (5:11). Jesus Christ is, for John, the bringer of life, its very Lord. The whole idea may be summed up in that all-inclusive declaration, "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

But entirely aside from the use of the title the Lord of Life as a distinct name, there is a wealth of material from which we may draw in order to show how intimately Jesus' work was related to life. On the very surface of the Gospel story Jesus is presented as the Giver and Restorer of life so frequently that it soon appears as the dominant theme. From beginning to end He appears as a healer. The miracles were largely those of healing. It is not an easy task to list the miracles and be sure one is not listing the same event twice. Nor can one feel that he is treading on sure ground in stating that the events before him are historical or that they have not assumed a form in the telling which would not coincide with the actual event as it occurred. But the point to be made here is that Jesus made the impression that He was a healer, that he was actually, in other words, the Lord of Life, that He was master over the forces which destroy life, and that His healing ministry was an integral part of His mission. Alan Richardson makes clear in his *Miracle Stories of the Gospels* that the miracles are a part of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and not a series of addenda brought in to enhance the reputation of Jesus.

He cured men of their blindness, He made the dumb speak, He cleansed lepers, He healed the man with the dropsy and the nobleman's son who had a fever, he cured the widow who was bent over with her long-continued infirmity, He restored the man with the withered hand—and so on through a long list. Jesus might be said to have been an enthusiast for good health; He wanted men and women to have sound bodies; anything which interfered with the full normal functioning of the human body was to Him a call to meet a need. He rejected the explanation that a man's ill fortune physically was a punishment from God, but looked upon it rather as an opportunity to heal and to display the power of God. He appears from the beginning to the end of the narrative as one who

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felt that disease was an incongruity, a blot on humanity, and that it should be eliminated. We spoil the whole story if we credit Him with the motive of displaying His power, or proving His divinity by performing wonders. It was rather an almost spontaneous overflowing of His compassion when He saw a son of Adam afflicted with disease or impaired by a deformity. He had a passion for life, for human well-being, for health and soundness. He demonstrates at every turn that He is Lord of Life, its Master and Defender.

Jesus did not stop with the physical. At the same time He was healing their bodies He was ministering to the minds of men. The whole question of demon-possession in the New Testament is full of interest. Undoubtedly those who in that time were thought to be possessed by evil spirits were suffering from what we today would designate as mental cases in one form or another, but then as now there was a difference between an ordinary physical malady and one which affected the brain centers and had produced some form of mental aberration. Jesus called a number of these back to mental health; a sane mind went with a sound body for Him and He seemed deeply anxious to cure both kinds of malady. He proved Himself to be the Lord of mental life as well as physical. The impressiveness lies quite as much in the attitude toward disease of all kinds as it does in the report that He was able actually to cure it and put men on their feet again. In Him there was none of the life-denying attitude which has been found in the history of Christianity, when men thought they were following in the footsteps of their Lord, when they denied the body its rights, allowed themselves to become filthy and unkempt, turned to celibacy as a Christian duty, and made human life a more or less unworthy prelude to heavenly bliss. This surely does despite to the example of Jesus and fails to recognize that human life had dignity in His eyes and was worthy of the best care which could be given it.

Nowhere can the significance of this present life be seen to better advantage than in Jesus' attitude toward death. It was to Him not only the antithesis of all that life stood for, but the eternal enemy of man. We have the mysterious and very difficult accounts of His bringing several men back into this life who were already dead. I do not pretend to be able to explain the event in any one of the cases recorded, nor do I think we can penetrate very far into the mind of Jesus as to what His action meant. What comes home, however, with tremendous force to anyone, whatever

His critical position may be, is that Jesus looked upon death as an enemy whose work He was sent to destroy. His action also sheds light on His attitude toward this present life. Think of the meaning of His willingness to bring men back to this life again when they had passed into the great beyond. He must have thought that our life here was essentially good to have brought men back into it. He was again the Lord of Life, not death. Death to Him was not to be temporized with; it was an enemy to be destroyed.

As Lord of Life Jesus gives ample evidence of interest in life in a variety of its manifestations. He was deeply interested in children and understood them. The very fact that they are pictured with Him and that He gave His attention to them indicated that He was going far beyond the conventional attitude of the men of His day. Not everyone is deeply fond of children as Jesus was, and fewer are able to make children want to be with them. A peculiar quality of personal attractiveness is necessary to make this possible. Not only sincerity—and who more quickly than a child can see through pretense at this point?—but sympathy with childish ways, the ability to enter into the fun and make-believe of childhood—these are essential elements in the quality of spirit of anyone who finds children naturally coming to Him and liking Him. Jesus might almost be said to have discovered childhood and made it supremely important. In no other great religious founder can such a bent of mind and attitude of heart be discovered. It was a part of His insatiable love of life, just natural, everyday human life, in the simplicity of its daily manifestation and lived out in the ordinary human relations.

We are told that He attended a wedding at Cana of Galilee and there turned the water into wine. Few of us were ever taken beyond that point when this lesson was taught in our early Sunday-school days. But the question may well be asked, What motive led Jesus to provide the wine for the merrymaking at a wedding? The only answer is that He so entered into the spirit of the occasion that He did what He could to make it even more memorable. He entered into the happiness of the wedding and made it a part of His own joy in life. No recluse was He, but one who shared the spirit of such an event—it was a part of human life and He made it His own.

There is further evidence of Jesus' feeling for the social life in which He lived and would play a part. He was not only conscious of the ameni-

ties of human life, but felt aggrieved when the niceties of courteous treatment were neglected. We have the account in Luke's Gospel (7:36-50) of the woman who came into the house of Simon the Pharisee and anointed His feet. Simon protested and Jesus surprised him by rebuking him for his lack of courtesy: "I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet . . . . thou gavest me no kiss . . . . my head with oil thou didst not anoint." These were just the ordinary amenities of social life, well understood and practiced in the Palestine of that day. Jesus was not only well versed in these customs but expected them to be practiced as He went in and out among men. He had a nice sense of what was fitting in human intercourse; He would have life lived on high levels.

The contrast between Jesus and other religious leaders and founders is striking. No greater figure has appeared on the horizon of Indian life than that of Gautama Buddha. He was one of earth's noblemen who lived his life unsullied by the evils of his day and has remained through the centuries an example of high idealism worked out consistently in a long and useful life. But with all this, the contrast between him and Jesus is very impressive. At no point is it to be seen more clearly than just here, in the estimate each placed on human life. True, the Buddha repudiated the severe asceticism of his day and adopted the "Middle Way," between asceticism on one side and luxury on the other, thus setting a splendid example of wholesome living. But even so, the common life in its ordinary relations was rejected by him—that is, for any man or woman who desired to make progress toward the goal which he looked upon as worthy and satisfying. He had come to the conclusion that the source of all evil in human life was desire, the craving thirst for money, pleasure and fame. Had he gone no farther he would have carried many others, not Buddhists, with him. But when he included among the cravings which must be rooted out of a man's life the desire for wife and family, for happiness, the simple happiness of an Indian villager, and even for a life beyond death, his departure from the position of Jesus is most marked. Many things which are perfectly innocent and are the natural accompaniments of life as it is lived among normal human beings were repudiated by the Buddha. The result was that wholesomeness was turned into unnaturalness as one penetrates the farther into the Buddhist scheme. The Buddhist monk was compelled as a part of his training to frequent cemeteries and morbidly gaze at human skeletons and think—even down to the noxious details—

about the decaying body, all in order to be the more deeply impressed by the worthlessness of human life. This is not the realm in which Jesus lived. The Buddhist system is life-denying, while that of Jesus was life-affirming.

Much the same can be said of certain aspects of Hinduism, though the approach is quite different from that of Buddhism. From a very early period it has been thought meritorious to give oneself to various kinds of austerity or self-torture, even to the point of self-mutilation—holding the hand closed until the nails grow through and come out on the other side, sitting on beds of spikes, holding the arm erect until the muscles harden and atrophy so that it cannot be moved. These and many other strange and revolting practices are still common in India. They betoken a conception of human life which is not wholesome. Life in its fullness is to be repudiated. Fortunately self-torture affects comparatively few of the vast population of the country. But even when no such extreme measures are adopted, there is present a sense of unreality and dread when one looks out on human life. The deadening influence of the law of Karma, which can promise only an endless succession of lives as the soul transmigrates from one existence to another, is always apparent. Acts of any kind, just living the ordinary life of the common man, produce Karma, so life comes to be more or less of a nightmare. If only one could cut the connection so that he might drop off into Nirvana, that would be wonderful. So all the methods of salvation in Hinduism have as their one objective release from the necessity of transmigration. When it is realized that this means release from conscious existence its full import becomes evident. It is hard to know exactly what to call the state of Nirvana, for the erstwhile individual is now absorbed in the nothingness of the All, the final reality, which is unconscious and attributeless, of whom or which no positive statement can be made at all. Again, we have a life-denying system, utterly at variance with that of Jesus. He is the Lord of Life, real life, pulsing with the blood of conscious vitality and joyful in participation in the common life of men.

But what of suffering and death? Did not Jesus face these realities and come to terms with them? Yes and no. He did not deny their existence; He faced them calmly and was not afraid, but He did not come to terms with them. Did He not know that both are the common lot of humankind and cannot be escaped? Jesus was a realist and never blinked facts; He was deeply conscious of the inroads of disease and suffering; He

saw death, too, but there was a difference in His attitude. Death was an enemy; it lacked finality; it could be overcome; there was something more vital and real beyond. The life of Jesus was an everlasting protest against death; He could not be complacent in thinking of it or anything connected with it. His raising of the dead might be said to indicate that He was conscious of powers in the universe, in God, with which He was in contact and which in the end would destroy the archenemy of life and inaugurate a new era, when life could be seen in its fullness, with nothing to mar the joy of living or cloud the prospects as one peered into the future.

The resurrection was to the disciples, and may be to us, the confirmation of all that Jesus anticipated. He had conquered death, He had passed through, He could now be crowned the Lord of Life, for life in Him had been demonstrated as stronger than death. The conqueror had been vindicated. Death could not reach Him, although He gave up his life on Calvary. Death was the human lot, but it was seen for what it really was, an intruder and a deceiver. We are the children of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ of the glory that is yet to be. Death is also our lot as human beings, but neither is death for us final; life is stronger and life must prevail. We can always remember that Jesus is the Lord of Life; in His hands are the keys of eternal life, and we shall share that life with Him forever.

# Rethinking the Social Function of the Church

SAMUEL McCREA CAVERT

A DOZEN years ago my approach to a discussion of the social function of the Church would have been very different from that which I make today: not different in central convictions about the need for social responsibility and social action, but different in perspective and emphasis. If the changed outlook were something which had happened merely to an individual, it would merit no attention. There is reason to believe, however, that it is symptomatic of a general trend in American Christianity.

1. In the first place, our thinking about the social function of the Church is more *theological*—more deeply rooted in the basic Christian faith. We realize more keenly that Christian ethics must be theological ethics. We are less content simply with sociological analysis and moral idealism—we want to know what connection there is between our social hopes and the nature of Reality. The contrast between the earlier mood and the mood of today is illustrated by the difference in atmosphere between the Stockholm Conference on Christian Life and Work in 1925 and the Oxford Conference on the same subject in 1937. At Stockholm most of the delegates, with the exception of some of the Continental Europeans, assumed that in a generation or so war could be abolished, social injustice eliminated and an order of peace and brotherhood established. At Oxford that rosy idealism had yielded to somber realism in the face of the mounting evidence of the depth and tenacity of the sinfulness and evil with which we have to deal. At Stockholm the gospel often seemed to mean something as simple as the moral exhortation, "Roll up your sleeves, get busy and build a Christian society." At Oxford it was clearly seen that such a message is no gospel—that the Church has Good News for men only if it can show them that behind their striving and failing there is God who both wills a new society and in Jesus Christ has mediated more than human insight and more than human power for its achievement. We know now that the strength of the Christian social movement is ultimately to be found in Christian doctrine.

This marks a decided change from the characteristic note of the "social gospel" in the twenties. There were then not a few of its spokesmen who regarded the theological affirmations of historic Christianity as something that might as well be relegated to the scrap heap of forgotten antiquities. They were so impatient to get on with immediate jobs of applying Christianity to social conditions that they did not take much time to understand the Christianity which they proposed to apply. But in the world of 1943 this is to ignore the fundamental social problem. The deepest issue today is not the program of the Church, but its faith. The crucial question is not merely whether the Church can effect certain social changes, but whether it has a world view capable of standing against competing world views. For great rivals of the Christian conception of Reality and of man are abroad which claim the allegiance of millions. New gods are being proclaimed—like the Absolute State and the Absolute Race—as the supreme objects of faith. A new doctrine of man is being announced—of man not as a free and responsible moral agent created by God for eternal fellowship with Him, but as the creature of the State, finding his whole fulfillment in the service of earthly ends. The Church is now engaged in a struggle for the existence of Christianity itself as the truth about the nature and destiny of mankind.

In such a situation it makes the utmost difference to men whether (in the words of J. H. Oldham) "that to which the Church points them is a world of ideals or a world of solid and inescapable fact." Christianity in the time of its origin pointed to the latter. The gospel which triumphed over the Roman Empire was not merely a set of social objectives, however exalted. What, then, gave the gospel its power was not just a vision of a new ideal, but a revelation of the ultimately Real. Christianity won its victory in the crumbling Roman world because it was Good News about God—a God whose will is the final reality in the universe and who has entered into human life for man's redemption. Likewise today the question which transcends all others is whether Christianity is true or false in what it affirms about God and man. If our ideals of brotherhood and justice are only projections of our human wishes into a universe that at heart is alien to them, then the nerve of Christian social effort is cut before we begin. If, on the other hand, we can really believe in God through Jesus Christ, we have a sure foundation on which to build. Christianity is, indeed, a way of living, but it is also a way of thinking, and it is futile to expect men

to be Christian in conduct unless they can have faith that the world is actually the kind of world that is made for Christian living. As Baron von Hügel once said, "A thousand '*oughts*' cannot take the place of one '*is*.'"

The world today is a confusing welter of rival social programs just because men have no common world view, no common interpretation of the meaning and end of human existence—that is to say, no common theology. In this chaotic world no other social function of the Church can be comparable with that of leading men into a deeper understanding of the reality and the nature of God as Christ has made Him known. If divorced from this elemental function of witnessing to a more-than-human significance of life the Church has nothing of distinctive significance to contribute to the world.

What we are pleading for is no less attention to ethical analysis and criticism of political and economic conditions, no less condemnation of social injustice and wrong, no less resolute organized efforts for needed change. All these are as necessary as ever. But none of them is the keystone of the Church's function in its relation to society; the President of the United States, for example, speaking in behalf of the government, gives attention to all of these things. These functions find their true place in the program of the Church only as they are in organic relation to the vital core of its faith. Mr. Norman Thomas summed the matter up well in an address to theological students a few years ago. You might have expected Mr. Thomas, more than most, to advise ministers to put all their emphasis on political action and economic reforms, but this is what he said:

"The Church may well, as one of its activities, promote discussion of current problems, but no church justifies itself simply by becoming a forum. . . . I do not think that the Church has any particular significance for society except as it has something fundamental to say about the universe and man's relation to it. . . . For the minister, a social conscience and some humanitarian enthusiasm are no substitute for a living message about a God whose love and power he has found not only his peace . . . but also his ground of hope for the victory of the Kingdom of God and peace for all mankind."

2. Our thinking about the social function of the Church is also more *evangelistic*, in the broad sense of the term—more inclined to put the primary stress on the spirit and motives of men's lives. We have become impatient with grandiose schemes for a better social order which do not get down to the root difficulties in the sin and selfishness of human hearts. There is less disposition to assume that some change in the external structure

of our economic environment will solve our problems. It is more obvious that there is no way of herding humanity *en masse* into an earthly Kingdom of God by some ingenious reorganization of society. Even if our present social order could miraculously be changed overnight into the ideal of our dreams it would fail dismally the next week if it had to be operated by men who were still as acquisitive as before, as obsessed with materialistic standards of success, as lustful of power over others. This sounds hopelessly old-fashioned, but old-fashioned things have a way, after a time, of becoming very up-to-date.

So this is not a time when the Church needs to apologize for insisting on repentance and conversion and spiritual renewal as the foundation of any better social order. Without these, even our best economic and political schemes will not get very far. Vida Scudder, a Christian with a kindled social imagination second to none, put it well when she uttered this word of admonition to the ministry:

"The hungry sheep leave church, swollen less with theological wind than in Milton's day, but with sociological chaff, which is no more nourishing. Earnest people go to church very wistful, and what they crave from Christian preaching is not instruction about reforms. They want release for the frozen springs of will and feeling, power imparted to open the soul to the inflowing grace of God."

Our stress on the necessity of a change of heart and mind in persons must, however, not be regarded as a reversion to what is sometimes called the "gospel for the individual" in contrast with the "social gospel." It cannot be said too strongly that the old antithesis is wholly misleading. There is really no such thing as an individual existing outside of the context of society; he cannot be abstracted from the social matrix which includes all his social contacts and his whole heritage of social institutions. What we are urging, therefore, is very different from the kind of conversion which addressed itself to an abstract and wholly theoretical individual conceived as an entity apart from his social relationships. A conversion in that limited and artificial sense affords no assurance of bringing forth social fruits meet for repentance. The kind of conversion which we assert as the elemental necessity is a reorientation of the whole personality to the Divine will, to the Christian understanding of human life and to the true ends of our social existence.

The experience of an old Negro preacher in Columbia, South Carolina, who died a few years ago, may be taken as a sort of symbol of the synthesis of the individual and the social notes in Christianity. This Negro, popu-

larly known as Uncle Jaggers, had preached ten thousand times from a single text. The verse which had served him for a lifetime was St. Paul's word, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." He had preached his first sermon when a slave boy seventeen years of age. His last message, when he was well over ninety, was still based on the same passage of Scripture. When asked why he followed the unusual practice of using only a single text, he replied that everything he knew, which was worth saying, could be said under that head! It was a profound insight, for St. Paul's word fuses two emphases that have to be kept together. The mind of Christ is to be "in you"; if it is not in persons it is nowhere. At the same time the mind of Christ is an outlook on life which is related to one's total experience.

Even a profound conversion does not, of course, automatically result in the changing of social systems or the correcting of basic social injustices. We could not expect such a result even if the whole population were thus converted, for social enlightenment and intelligence must still discover how to make the "mind of Christ" effective in situations so complex as to baffle the most earnest Christian. The personal alignment of heart and will remains, however, a *sine qua non* of a better social order.

But it would be wholly unjustified to infer that, from the standpoint of Christianity, one system is as good or as bad as another or that Christianity does not have a direct concern with the economic and political institutions under which men live. The more we interpret Christianity in terms of Christian personality the more solicitous we must be that there shall be social and economic conditions that minister to personality or at least do not put needless obstacles in the way of its development. A church that did not have such a concern would be like a physician trying to cure a tubercular patient without placing him in a climate where he would have a favorable chance.

3. Our approach to the social function of the Church is also more *educational*. We are less inclined to think that the Church is not doing anything significant unless it is agitating for some legislation or championing some high-powered crusade of reform. We see its more important function as quietly, day by day, influencing its own members to a higher discharge of Christian citizenship by training them to be more sensitive to moral issues and to examine all public questions in the light of the Christian understanding of life. It was once said of the late Professor Faulkner,

of Drew Seminary, that he had "formed the habit of meditating on the daily newspaper in the presence of the Lord." If the Church could get people to do that, to think of all that happens in the City Hall, in Congress, in the market place, in Wall Street, in terms of the "mind of Christ" it would be doing the most fundamental thing in fulfilling its social responsibility.

One of the reasons why we are putting more emphasis on Christian social education is because we have become more conscious of the limitations of the Church in the field of direct legislative and political action. There is no valid reason, in principle, why churches should not strive to attain their ethical objectives by securing the enactment and enforcement of appropriate laws. If religion has an integral relation to all man's associations and institutions, it is properly concerned with every process, including the legislative process, by which they are determined. Bishop Charles H. Brent once expressed this view in a meaty sentence: "The business of the Church (he said) embraces the whole scope of life, and inasmuch as legislation registers the focusing and formulation of public opinion with respect to social needs, it is the business of the Church to see to it that, as far as it has influence, such legislation has a Christian soul."

We do well, however, to recognize the decided limits as to what legislative procedures can contribute to social morality. It has been a popular American fallacy to assume, in the face of some evil, that if only we can get a law against it, the problem will be solved! Legislation is effective only when it is an expression of and sustained by a widespread public opinion, and that public opinion must have foundations in the continuous education of individual citizens. Reforms must ordinarily evolve out of a long educational process, and short cuts, however tempting, usually turn out to be self-defeating.

Moreover, the methods of the Church in working for its ends ought normally to be different from the methods of the State. The characteristic method of the State is coercion; the policeman's club is its symbol. The characteristic method of the Church, on the other hand, is reliance on the development of spiritual insight and moral persuasion. This is not to say that the Church may not urge legal support for moral ideals as against antisocial individuals. There is an unquestioned place for the testimony of the Church on any matters in which Christian principles are clearly at stake. Yet a warning is in order against the Church's placing its confidence

in political methods rather than the methods which are more directly appropriate to its own nature. When we resort to the methods of the State, we are in danger of obscuring the distinctive character of the Church. If the Church becomes a "pressure group" and by organizing the voters or lobbying with legislators, in a perfectly honorable and legitimate way, secures the enactment of certain laws, it may succeed in accomplishing what it seeks and yet find that it has paid too high a price for its success. If you are willing to have the public-at-large think of the Church as just another "pressure group" you may rush to mobilize its support for or against a host of specific bills and spend most of your time writing to Congressmen and going to Washington; but in the long run it would be fatal to the true success of the Church if such procedures obscured its central task.

Another reason for making us think of the Church's social responsibility more in long-range educational terms and less in terms of campaigns for specific schemes of reform is the recognition that the Church as Church, or Christians as Christians, do not have any special competence for deciding intricate questions of a very technical character in the economic or political field. Whenever, on any question, however complicated it be, there is something to be said which can be directly derived from the Christian gospel, the Church, or its minister, has not only a right but a duty to speak. But, too often, we offer, not some light given by the Christian faith and the Christian understanding of life, but merely our own opinion as to what procedures would be effective. We are, of course, entitled to express our opinions, but it is important to make it clear that they are *our opinions*, not something carrying the moral authority of the Christian gospel. Professor John C. Bennett has pointedly reminded us that even St. Paul made this distinction: "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my judgment." If we could always be equally clear as to whether we are speaking in the name of the Lord or giving our private judgment, with a recognition that the judgments of other sincere Christians may differ, it would be well.

In every political and economic situation we have to distinguish between two different decisions: first, what *end* the Christian should pursue; and, second, what *means* will achieve that end. In the first, Christianity has a direct and inescapable stake; in the second, the answer often depends

not on one's Christianity, but rather on the soundness of one's judgment as to what methods will be most effective. When, in matters of method, there is ample room for legitimate differences of opinion, individual Christians may rightly speak, but the Church can hardly speak as a church or assume to commit its members to a single view.

We must always remember, however, that if there is a danger of the Church's becoming too detailed in speaking on problems of a highly complex character, there is a more subtle danger of its uttering only vague and pious generalities. The chief reproach against the Church is not that it has been too specific in its dealing with social issues, but that it has been too sluggish and that what it says has no effective "punch." If a church has to choose between the alternative extremes either of keeping out of the rough-and-tumble of the struggle for social justice or of participating in it in very faulty and imperfect ways, it had better choose the latter. It is more to be feared that the Church will say and do nothing on puzzling problems than that it will make some mistakes!

But is there not some valid strategy for the Church which will avoid the errors of either extreme? Certain discussions at the Oxford Conference help to give an answer, in their reference to what were called "middle axioms." Such "middle axioms" are not, on the one hand, mere abstractions like "brotherhood" and "justice," and yet, on the other hand, are not announcements of specific techniques. Take, for example, the "axiom" proclaimed by Oxford that "regardless of race or class every child and youth must have opportunities of education suitable for the full development of his particular capacities and must be free from those adventitious handicaps in the matter of health and environment which our society loads upon large numbers of the children of the less privileged classes." Here is a norm which is definite enough to be applied with telling effect to such concrete conditions as those which confront Negroes, share croppers and migrant workers. At the same time it does not attempt to say which of several legislative proposals or measures for correcting these conditions will be soundest in practice.

An admirable illustration of "middle axioms" is the recent "Statement of Political Propositions" put forth by the Federal Council's Commission to Study the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace. Looking forward to the postwar settlement, it sets up the following guideposts:

"1. The peace must provide the political framework for a continuing collaboration of the United Nations and, in due course, of neutral and enemy nations.

"2. The peace must make provision for bringing within the scope of international agreement those economic and financial acts of national governments which have widespread international repercussions.

"3. The peace must make provision for an organization to adapt the treaty structure of the world to changing underlying conditions.

"4. The peace must proclaim the goal of autonomy for subject peoples, and it must establish international organization to assure and to supervise the realization of that end.

"5. The peace must establish procedures for controlling military establishments everywhere.

"6. The peace must establish in principle, and seek to achieve in practice, the right of individuals everywhere to religious and intellectual liberty."

These proposals, it will be noted, do not presume to make a blueprint of world organization, but they would, if adopted, definitely determine the *direction* in which our nation would move. They are not detailed formulations of procedures, but certainly they are not platitudes. They call for decision and action: they are a positive commitment to international co-operation as against any policy of isolationism.

Another important part of the educational task of the Church in the social field is that which Oxford called the "searchlight" function. By this is meant that the churches should make a penetrating exposure of existing conditions and make the facts stand out so plainly that they cannot help challenging the Christian conscience. Any alert minister in the course of his pastoral work has opportunities of knowing what certain social arrangements or industrial practices in his own community are doing to blight the lives of men and women and families. National agencies of the churches, like the denominational departments of social education and action and the Federal Council's Department of Research and Education can supply local congregations with materials for use in adult classes or forums in which their members can be helped to recognize situations that are flagrantly out of accord with the requirements of Christian love and justice.

This searchlight function must reach not only to particular conditions and circumstances, but also to the social and economic structure itself. For the forces of evil with which Christians have to contend are not found in individual hearts alone; they have entered into the institutional structures of society which are passed on from generation to generation and which for that very reason are likely to be accepted too uncritically. Perhaps,

however, a word of caution is needed against fostering the naïve assumption that because our present economic order has grave evils, some different system is sure to be better. It is surprising how realistic some people can be in examining our present order, and how Utopian in their attitude toward some other order. We cannot declare too plainly that the existing system tends toward such evils as an overstimulus to the acquisitive spirit, too great a disparity between wealth and poverty, and the placing of too great power over others in the hands of a few. But it does not necessarily follow that some other system, when it is in actual operation, will secure a total result which will be more consonant with the Christian ideal. There is always a subtle tendency to attribute social evils to the system itself rather than to human sin, and to assume that a change in the structure would eradicate the wrong. What may happen in some other system, however, is that the old sinful impulse will merely express itself in a new way. If capitalism puts too much power in the hands of owners or employers, this does not prove that society will be better off if too much power is transferred to a socialist state.

4. Our approach to the social function of the Church must give far more attention to the place of the *layman* in the program. If there has been something of a protest among laymen against the activity of the clergy in economic matters the reason is understandable. Programs of economic action can be put into effect only by lay people in their daily spheres of work. There is abundant justification for impatience with clerical pronouncements put forth by men who are themselves so detached from industrial and economic responsibility that they do not have to make any actual decisions. There is even reason to fear that there is an occasional minister that appears almost like a "common scold," condemning people without any real understanding of the great difficulties and perplexities which they face.

It would be well for all of us who are ministers to remind ourselves again and again, when we talk of social action by the Church, that it is church members—not the clergy—who are going to have to do most of the *acting*. The minister, by his conduct of worship, his preaching, his teaching, his pastoral counseling and his community influence, may hold up and clarify the Christian goals and sensitize the conscience with reference to those goals. But it is laymen and women in the everyday conduct of economic and industrial and political processes who alone can

effect the needed changes. We merely confuse the issue if we let it be assumed that social changes can be effected by "the Church" in some abstract, impersonal way apart from the action of its members who are in the posts where responsible decisions have to be made. Many discussions of the social function of the Church are theoretical and futile because it is only ministers who do the discussing. The thinking of the world-at-large about the Church has also become too clericalized. One of the first conditions of the Church's making a larger contribution to the solution of social problems, as J. H. Oldham urges, is to *laicize* our conception of the Church.

What is urgently needed is that the religious teacher and the lay Christian of first-hand experience should study together in Christian fellowship what the Christian goals are and how progress can be made in the direction of achieving them. The clergyman, by reason of his special training and greater opportunity for reflective study, often has a prophetic understanding of the meaning of the Christian gospel and also a wide perspective which the man absorbed in the necessities of immediate action may not possess in the same degree. The Christian layman, however, by reason of his daily experience, is the only one who is able to take into account all the practical factors which are involved in bringing changes to pass. The competence for a Christian solution which neither one has alone can be secured through their collaboration. Such collaboration will not be brought about by facile condemnations of the conduct of industry and business and statesmanship; it requires from the minister the spirit of the true pastor of souls who does not shrink from speaking the truth, but always speaks against the background of a sympathetic effort to enter into the problems of others.

5. Finally, our approach to our Christian social function must give more attention to the *Church* itself. Unless the Christian community which we call the Church can provide in its own life some demonstration of what a truly Christian society is, everything else that it says and does will fall flat. The Church has accepted the ordinary standards of the world to such an extent that its distinctive witness is blurred and it does not speak to the world with its rightful power.

The present crisis in race relations may serve as a challenging illustration. Why is the influence of the Church so feeble in this realm? Chiefly because it has allowed the pattern of segregation which prevails in society at large to invade its own domain. If the Church were to show

clearly that it is itself a fellowship which can rise above distinctions of color it would be making a unique and powerful contribution to interracial brotherhood.

The Church will gain the right to be heard on social questions with full respect only as it becomes more Christian in its own internal life as a social group. The fellowship of the Church must be lifted to a higher level and church membership be made to mean much more in terms of social ethical discipline than it now means. If the Church is going to help the world to understand what a Christian society would be like, it must bear its testimony not by word of mouth merely, but by the Word made incarnate in its life. There must be a more evident correspondence between the quality of its own fellowship and its public teaching—a visible embodying of what Christianity means as a social force.

# The Poison of Subjectivism

CLIVE STAPLES LEWIS

ONE cause of misery and vice is always present with us in the greed and pride of men, but at certain periods in history this is greatly increased by the temporary prevalence of some false philosophy. Correct thinking will not make good men of bad ones; but a purely theoretical error may remove ordinary checks to evil and deprive good intentions of their natural support. An error of this sort is abroad at present. I am not referring to the Power philosophies of the Totalitarian states, but to something that goes deeper and spreads wider and which, indeed, has given these Power philosophies their golden opportunity. I am referring to Subjectivism.

After studying his environment man has begun to study himself. Up to that point, he has assumed his own reason and through it seen all other things. Now, his own reason has become the object: it is as if we took out our eyes to look at them. Thus studied, his own reason appears to him as the epiphenomenon which accompanies chemical or electrical events in a cortex which is itself the by-product of a blind evolutionary process. His own logic, hitherto the king whom events in all possible worlds must obey, becomes merely subjective. There is no reason for supposing that it yields truth.

As long as this dethronement refers only to the theoretical reason, it cannot be wholehearted. The scientist has to assume the validity of his own logic (in the stout old fashion of Plato or Spinoza) even in order to prove that it is merely subjective, and therefore he can only flirt with subjectivism. It is true that this flirtation sometimes goes pretty far. There are modern scientists, I am told, who have dropped the words *truth* and *reality* out of their vocabulary and who hold that the end of their work is not to know what is there but simply to get practical results. This is, no doubt, a bad symptom. But, in the main, subjectivism is such an uncomfortable yokefellow for research that the danger, in this quarter, is continually counteracted.

But when we turn to practical reason the ruinous effects are found operating in full force. By practical reason I mean our judgment of good

and evil. If you are surprised that I include this under the heading of reason at all, let me remind you that your surprise is itself one result of the subjectivism I am discussing. Until modern times no thinker of the first rank ever doubted that our judgments of value were rational judgments or that what they discovered was objective. It was taken for granted that in temptation passion was opposed, not to some sentiment, but to reason. Thus Plato thought, thus Aristotle, thus Hooker, Butler or Doctor Johnson. The modern view is very different. It does not believe that value judgments are really judgments at all. They are sentiments, or complexes, or attitudes, produced in a community by the pressure of its environment and its traditions, and differing from one community to another. To say that a thing is good is merely to express our feeling about it; and our feeling about it is the feeling we have been socially conditioned to have.

But if this is so, then we might have been conditioned to feel otherwise. "Perhaps," thinks the reformer or the educational expert, "it would be better if we were. Let us improve our morality." Out of this apparently innocent idea comes the disease that will certainly end our species (and, in my view, damn our souls) if it is not crushed; the fatal superstition that men can create values, that a community can choose its "ideology" as men choose their clothes. Everyone is indignant when he hears the Germans define justice is that which is to the interest of the Third Reich. But it is not always remembered that this indignation is perfectly groundless if we ourselves regard morality as a subjective sentiment to be altered at will. Unless there is some objective standard of good, overarching Germans, Japanese and ourselves alike whether any of us obey it or no, then of course the Germans are as competent to create their ideology as we are to create ours. If "good" and "better" are terms deriving their sole meaning from the ideology of each people, then of course ideologies themselves cannot be better or worse than one another. Unless the measuring rod is independent of the things measured, we can do no measuring. For the same reason it is useless to compare the moral ideas of one age with those of another: progress and decadence are alike meaningless words.

All this is so obvious that it amounts to an identical proposition. But how little it is now understood can be gauged from the procedure of the moral reformer who, after saying that "good" means "what we are conditioned to like" goes on cheerfully to consider whether it might be "better"

that we should be conditioned to like something else. What in Heaven's name does he mean by "better"?

He usually has at the back of his mind the notion that if he throws over traditional judgment of value, he will find something else, something more "real" or "solid" on which to base a new scheme of values. He will say, for example, "We must abandon irrational taboos and base our values on the good of the community"—as if the maxim "Thou shalt promote the good of the community" were anything more than a polysyllabic variant of "Do as you would be done by" which has itself no other basis than the old universal value judgment he claims to be rejecting. Or he will endeavor to base his values on biology and tell us that we must act thus and thus for the preservation of our species. Apparently he does not anticipate the question, "Why should the species be preserved?" He takes it for granted that it should, because he is really relying on traditional judgments of value. If he were starting, as he pretends, with a clean slate, he could never reach this principle. Sometimes he tries to do so by falling back on "instinct." "We have an instinct to preserve our species," he may say. But have we? And if we have, who told us that we must obey our instincts? And why should we obey this instinct in the teeth of many others which conflict with the preservation of the species? The reformer knows that some instincts are to be obeyed more than others only because he is judging instincts by a standard, and that standard is, once more, the traditional morality which he claims to be superseding. The instincts themselves obviously cannot furnish us with grounds for grading the instincts in a hierarchy. If you do not bring a knowledge of their comparative respectability to your study of them, you can never derive it from them.

This whole attempt to jettison traditional values as something subjective and to substitute a new scheme of values for them is wrong. It is like trying to lift yourself by your own coat collar. Let us get two propositions written into our minds with indelible ink.

(1) The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of planting a new sun in the sky or a new primary color in the spectrum.

(2) Every attempt to do so consists in arbitrarily selecting some one maxim of traditional morality, isolating it from the rest, and erecting it into a *unum necessarium*.

The second proposition will bear a little illustration. Ordinary morality tells us to honor our parents and cherish our children. By taking

the second precept alone you construct a Futurist Ethic in which the claims of "posterity" are the sole criterion. Ordinary morality tells us to keep promises and also to feed the hungry. By taking the second precept alone you get a Communist Ethic in which "production," and distribution of the products to the people, are the sole criteria. Ordinary morality tells us, *ceteris paribus*, to love our kindred and fellow citizens more than strangers. By isolating this precept you can get either an Aristocratic Ethic with the claims of our class as sole criterion, or a Racialist Ethic where no claims but those of blood are acknowledged. These monomaniac systems are then used as a ground from which to attack traditional morality; but absurdly, since it is from traditional morality alone that they derive such semblance of validity as they possess. Starting from scratch, with no assumptions about value, we could reach none of them. If reverence for parents or promises is a mere subjective by-product of physical nature, so is reverence for race or posterity. The trunk to whose root the reformer would lay the axe is the only support of the particular branch he wishes to retain.

All idea of "new" or "scientific" or "modern" moralities must therefore be dismissed as mere confusion of thought. We have only two alternatives. Either the maxims of traditional morality must be accepted as axioms of practical reason which neither admit nor require argument to support them and not to "see" which is to have lost human status; or else there are no values at all, what we mistook for values being "projections" of irrational emotions. It is perfectly futile, after having dismissed traditional morality with the question, "Why should we obey it?" then to attempt the reintroduction of value at some later stage in our philosophy. Any value we reintroduce can be countered in just the same way. Every argument used to support it will be an attempt to derive from premises in the indicative mood a conclusion in the imperative. And this is impossible.

Against this view the modern mind has two lines of defense. The first claims that traditional morality is different in different times and places—in fact, that there is not one morality but a thousand. The second exclaims that to tie ourselves to an immutable moral code is to cut off all progress and acquiesce in "stagnation." Both are unsound.

Let us take the second one first. And let us strip it of the illegitimate emotional power it derives from the word "stagnation" with its suggestion of puddles and mantled pools. If water stands too long it stinks. To infer thence that whatever stands long must be unwholesome is to be the victim

of metaphor. Space does not stink because it has preserved its three dimensions from the beginning. The square on the hypotenuse has not gone moldy by continuing to equal the sum of the squares on the other two sides. Love is not dishonored by constancy, and when we wash our hands we are seeking stagnation and "putting the clock back," artificially restoring our hands to the *status quo* in which they began the day and resisting the natural trend of events which would increase their dirtiness steadily from our birth to our death. For the emotive term "stagnant" let us substitute the descriptive term "permanent." Does a permanent moral standard preclude progress? On the contrary, except on the supposition of a changeless standard, progress is impossible. If good is a fixed point, it is at least possible that we should get nearer and nearer to it; but if the terminus is as mobile as the train, how can the train progress toward it? Our ideas of the good may change, but they cannot change either for the better or the worse if there is no absolute and immutable good to which they can approximate or from which they can recede. We can go on getting a sum more and more nearly right only if the one perfectly right answer is "stagnant."

And yet it will be said, I have just admitted that our ideas of good may improve. How is this to be reconciled with the view that "traditional morality" is a *depositum fidei* which cannot be deserted? The answer can be understood if we compare a real moral advance with a mere innovation. From the Stoic and Confucian "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you" to the Christian "Do as you would be done by" is a real advance. The morality of Nietzsche is a mere innovation. The first is an advance because no one who did not admit the validity of the old maxim could see reason for accepting the new one, and anyone who accepted the old would at once recognize the new as an extension of the same principle. If he rejected it, he would have to reject it as a superfluity, something that went too far, not as something simply heterogeneous from his own ideas of value. But the Nietzschean ethic can be accepted only if we are ready to scrap traditional morals as a mere error and then to put ourselves in a position where we can find no ground for any value judgments at all. It is the difference between a man who says to us: "You like your vegetables moderately fresh; why not grow your own and have them perfectly fresh?" and a man who says, "Throw away that load and try eating bricks and centipedes instead." Real moral advances, in fine, are made *from within*

the existing moral tradition and in the spirit of that tradition and can be understood only in the light of that tradition. The outsider who has rejected the tradition cannot judge them. He has, as Aristotle said, no *arche*, no premises.

And what of the second modern objection—that the ethical standards of different cultures differ so widely that there is no common tradition at all? The answer is that this is a lie—a good, solid, resounding lie. If a man will go into a library and spend a few days with the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* he will soon discover the massive unanimity of the practical reason in man. From the Babylonian *Hymn to Samos*, from the Laws of Manu, the *Book of the Dead*, the Analects, the Stoics, the Platonists, from Australian aborigines and Redskins, he will collect the same triumphantly monotonous denunciations of oppression, murder, treachery and falsehood, the same injunctions of kindness to the aged, the young, and the weak, of alms giving and impartiality and honesty. He may be a little surprised (I certainly was) to find the precepts of mercy are more frequent than precepts of justice; but he will no longer doubt that there is such a thing as the law of nature. There are, of course, differences. There are even blindnesses in particular cultures—just as there are savages who cannot count up to twenty. But the pretense that we are presented with a mere chaos—that no outline of universally accepted value shows through—is simply false and should be contradicted in season and out of season wherever it is met. Far from finding a chaos, we find exactly what we should expect if good is indeed something objective and reason the organ whereby it is appended—that is, a substantial agreement with considerable local differences of emphasis and, perhaps, no one code that includes everything.

The two grand methods of obscuring this agreement are these: First, you can concentrate on those divergences about sexual morality which most serious moralists regard as belonging to positive rather than to natural law, but which rouse strong emotions. Differences about the definition of incest or between polygamy and monogamy come under this head. (It is untrue to say that the Greeks thought sexual perversion innocent. The continual tittering of Plato is really more evidential than the stern prohibition of Aristotle. Men titter thus only about what they regard as, at least, a *peccadillo*: the jokes about drunkenness in *Pickwick*, far from proving that the nineteenth-century English thought it innocent, prove the reverse.

There is an enormous difference of *degree* between the Greek view of perversion and the Christian, but there is not opposition.) The second method is to treat as differences in the judgment of value what are really ✓ differences in belief about fact. Thus human sacrifice, or persecution of witches, are cited as evidence of a radically different morality. But the real difference lies elsewhere. We do not hunt witches because we disbelieve in their existence. We do not kill men to avert pestilence because we do not think pestilence can thus be averted. We do "sacrifice" men in war, and we do hunt spies and traitors.

So far I have been considering the objections which unbelievers bring against the doctrine of objective value, or the law of nature. But in our days we must be prepared to meet objections from Christians too. "Humanism" and "liberalism" are coming to be used simply as terms of disapprobation, and both are likely to be so used of the position I am taking up. Behind them lurks a real theological problem. If we accept the primary platitudes of practical reason as the unquestioned premises of all action, are we thereby trusting our own reason so far that we ignore the fall, and are we retrogressively turning our absolute allegiance away from a person to an abstraction?

As regards the fall, I submit that the general tenor of scripture does not encourage us to believe that our knowledge of the law has been depraved in the same degree as our power to fulfill it. He would be a brave man who claimed to realize the fallen condition of man more clearly than St. Paul. In that very chapter (Romans 7) where he asserts most strongly our inability to keep the moral law he also asserts most confidently that we perceive the law's goodness and rejoice in it according to the inward man. Our righteousness may be filthy and ragged; but Christianity gives us no ground for holding that our perceptions of right are in the same condition. They may, no doubt, be impaired; but there is a difference between imperfect sight and blindness. A theology which goes about to represent our practical reason as radically unsound is heading for disaster. If we once admit that what God means by "goodness" is sheerly different from what we judge to be good, there is no difference left between pure religion and devil worship.

The other objection is much more formidable. If we once grant that our practical reason is really reason and that its fundamental imperatives are as absolute and categorical as they claim to be, then unconditional

allegiance to them is the duty of man. So is absolute allegiance to God. And these two allegiances must, somehow, be the same. But how is the relation between God and the moral law to be represented? To say that the moral law is God's law is no final solution. Are these things right because God commands them or does God command them because they are right? If the first, if good is to be *defined* as what God commands, then the goodness of God Himself is emptied of meaning and the commands of an omnipotent fiend would have the same claim on us as those of the "righteous Lord." If the second, then we seem to be admitting a cosmic dyarchy, or even making God Himself the mere executor of a law somehow external and antecedent to His own being. Both views are intolerable.

At this point we must remind ourselves that Christian theology does not believe God to be a person. It believes Him to be such that in Him a trinity of persons is consistent with a unity of Deity. In that sense it believes Him to be something very different from a person, just as a cube, in which six squares are consistent with unity of the body, is different from a square. (Flatlanders, attempting to imagine a cube, would either imagine the six squares coinciding, and thus destroy their distinctness, or else imagine them set out side by side, and thus destroy the unity. Our difficulties about the Trinity are much of the same kind.) It is therefore possible that the duality which seems to force itself upon us when we think, first, of our Father in Heaven, and, secondly, of the self-evident imperatives of the moral law, is not a mere error but a real (though inadequate and creaturely) perception of things that would necessarily be two in any mode of being which enters our experience, but which are not so divided in the absolute being of the superpersonal God. When we attempt to think of a person and a law, we are compelled to think of this person either as obeying the law or as making it. And when we think of Him as making it we are compelled to think of Him either as making it in conformity to some yet more ultimate pattern of goodness (in which case that pattern, and not He, would be supreme) or else as making it arbitrarily by a *sic volo, sic jubeo* (in which case He would be neither good nor wise). But it is probably just here that our categories betray us. It would be idle, with our merely mortal resources, to attempt a positive correction of our categories—*ambularvi in mirabilibus supra me*. But it might be permissible to lay down two negations: that God neither *obeys* nor

creates the moral law. The good is uncreated; it never could have been otherwise; it has in it no shadow of contingency; it lies, as Plato said, on the other side of existence. It is the *Rita* of the Hindus by which the gods themselves are divine, the *Tao* of the Chinese from which all realities proceed. But we, favored beyond the wisest pagans, know that what lies beyond existence, what admits no contingency, what lends divinity to all else, what is the ground of all existence, is not simply a law but also a begetting love, a love begotten, and the love which, being between these two, is also imminent in all those who are caught up to share the unity of their self-caused life. God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God.

These may seem fine-spun speculation: yet I believe that nothing short of this can save us. A Christianity which does not see moral and religious experience converging to meet at infinity, not at a negative infinity, but in the positive infinity of the living yet superpersonal God, has nothing, in the long run, to divide it from devil worship; and a philosophy which does not accept value as eternal and objective can lead us only to ruin. Nor is the matter of merely speculative importance. Many a popular "planner" on a democratic platform, many a mild-eyed scientist in a democratic laboratory means, in the last resort, just what the Fascist means. He believes that "good" means whatever men are conditioned to approve. He believes that it is the function of him and his kind to condition men; to create consciences by eugenics, psychological manipulation of infants, state education and mass propaganda. Because he is confused, he does not yet fully realize that those who create conscience cannot be subject to conscience themselves. But he must awake to the logic of his position sooner or later; and when he does, what barrier remains between us and the final division of the race into a few conditioners who stand themselves outside morality and the many conditioned in whom such morality as the experts choose is produced at the experts' pleasure? If "good" means only the local ideology, how can those who invent the local ideology be guided by any idea of good themselves? The very idea of freedom presupposes some objective moral law which overarches rulers and ruled alike. Subjectivism about values is eternally incompatible with democracy. We and our rulers are of one kind only so long as we are subject to one law. But if there is no law of nature, the *ethos* of any society is the

creation of its rulers, educators and conditioners; and every creator stands above and outside his own creation.

Unless we return to the crude and nurserylike belief in objective values, we perish. If we do, we may live, and such a return might have one minor advantage. If we believed in the absolute reality of elementary moral platitudes, we should value those who solicit our votes by other standards than have recently been in fashion. While we believe that good is something to be invented, we demand of our rulers such qualities as "vision," "dynamism," "creativity," and the like. If we returned to the objective view we should demand qualities much rarer, and much more beneficial—virtue, knowledge, diligence and skill. "Vision" is for sale, or claims to be for sale, everywhere. But give me a man who will do a day's work for a day's pay, who will refuse bribes, who will make up his facts, and who has learned his job.

# Prayer-Book Prayers for the Sick

VICTOR HERBERT LUKENS

**I**T IS interesting to note how the various prayer books and service books of the American Protestant Churches deal with sickness and its cure. Whether or not these books be "official" in the full sense of the term, or published by the respective denominational houses merely as helpful and suggestive manuals, they all contain contradictions and paradoxical assumptions in the matter of praying for the sick. After spending much time studying this situation, one is led to wish that the Church—using that term collectively—might make a fresh start in formulating prayers and intercessions for those afflicted with illness.

As it is now, there is hardly a reference in prayer-book prayers to remedies other than those which are spiritual or religious. Medicine and the doctor are scarcely ever referred to, and we might wonder if the Church sets any value at all upon these agencies in curing the sick—or even upon the recuperative powers of personality. To gain a complete view of this entire situation and to catch some of the implications which appear in prayers as they stand now, let us ask some questions concerning them.

## I. DOES GOD SEND SICKNESS?

Open first the *Common Prayer* of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Until the last revision, that of 1928, there was a definite reference to sickness as a "visitation" from God. We are glad to see that this expression has been deleted in recent years, and statements from the older book, as "Give him grace to take Thy visitation," have not been used in the new.

It is true that one prayer, which has not been revised, presents the Almighty and Everlasting God as "correcting" the persons He loves and "chastising" those whom He receives, and does speak of the sick one as "visited with God's hand." But in the new book we may read fourteen other prayers for the sick, and in none of them is any reference made to God as the author of our maladies. On the other hand, He is gloriously presented again and again as the "merciful Father and God of all comfort," to whom we may pray in the full assurance of His accustomed goodness.

The Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*, however, although revised as late as 1932, holds the same idea as that of the unrevised prayer

of the Episcopal *Prayer Book*, namely, that the sick person is suffering under the chastisement of the Lord our God—"who chastenest and again Thou healest." But most of the newly issued books take the other position.

It is thrilling to read the twelve prayers for the sick in *Collects and Prayers*, issued in 1935 by the United Lutheran Church. In them God is addressed as the "Giver of life and health, our daily help in time of need, whose dear Son bore for us unspeakable agonies," and so on. There is, however, one exception here. When following the ancient expressions, our Lord Jesus Christ is addressed as "chastening whom Thou lovest." But for the deaf, Christ's compassion is mentioned. The blind are reminded that Christ came to be the true light of the world and the mentally sick have offered for them the prayer that God's supernatural power may sustain and comfort them. The many prayers of this beautiful collection lift the heart up on a joyful billow of emotion toward God.

The prayer for the sick in the 1922 Congregational *Book of Church Services* is far removed from the thought of God as the author of sickness and expresses the idea that illness has "overtaken" the patient. Here is the essence of wisdom and understanding. Sickness is merely a misfortune which has caught up with us, one in which we can rest hopefully in God's love. No more perfect prayer could be offered.

This is surely a valid belief, namely, that sickness comes from natural causes and that it is not a "chastisement" or "visitation" from our kind Heavenly Father. On the contrary, we can believe that God's love is aroused to sympathy for us when we are sick, and is ready to be poured out for our recovery.

## II. DO THE PRAYER-BOOK PRAYERS IMPLY THAT THE SICK MAN WILL GET WELL?

One is amazed to find how often they do not. While prayers are not offered for the eyes or ears of the patient, he does hear them and in some cases does read them. For that reason it is imperative that they be psychologically well-planned. The sick man above everything else wants to get well, and those who pray for him, we would suppose, would have the same end in mind. But one is appalled to read the older prayers, which seem to center their attention, primarily, upon securing patience for the sufferer, and, secondly, upon preparing him for possible death.

Thus, the prayer in the Congregational book previously mentioned

asks that the sick one may "wait patiently" in God's love. In the Methodist *Pastor's Vade Mecum* the prayer is for "help to endure patiently the pain and burden of illness." The Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* asks God to grant that the sick one may take his sickness patiently. The book of the American Lutheran Church, *The Lord Thy Helper*, contains a similar petition for strength to be patient.

But these prayers to be patient do not seem to be directed toward getting the sick man well. It is true that they are accompanied by petitions for recovery, but these are plainly of secondary importance to the prayer for patience. The thought behind these petitions is that it is more important to be patient under God's visitation than it is to get well. But since the Church is now saying with new emphasis that sickness is merely an unfortunate occurrence which has overtaken us, the prayer for patience, in the sense that it is usually used, might better be omitted.

The prayer for patience does not appear to be sound, either from the point of view of religion or psychology. Instead of thinking of sickness as something from which to be released at the first possible moment by the gracious help of God and the doctor, it takes the view of sickness as something which will remain for a long while, thus requiring patient endurance. Psychologically, such prayer is dangerous because if one sets out to be patient, he does not set out to get well. Patience makes for inaction; what is needed is the arousing of the whole man to get well.

It may be wise now to consider the four types of persons who need prayers to assist them toward health. First, there are those apparently about to die. Every one of these books of prayer contains petitions for the dying. But it should seem desirable that, instead, prayers that the sick person may recover should be offered. "For days," said one irate doctor, "every attendant in our hospital had striven to build up a certain patient's confidence for getting well. When his pastor called, however, he offered a prayer for the dying and the next day that patient passed away." The doctor said that it was for this reason that he disliked to see a minister come to visit those who were gravely ill.

On the other hand, there is the case of a minister who was waiting in a hospital while his son was undergoing a critical operation. The doctor came from the operating room and told the father that there was little hope for the boy; that he was at the very point of death. The minister did not slowly make his way to the boy's side and offer a funereal prayer for

the dying. He felt that while life's blood still coursed through the lad's veins, hope should not be abandoned. The prayer he offered that day was that of a father, confident in the healing power of the Great Physician who was Himself a father. That confidence was not misplaced. The boy's life was spared.

The second group of persons who need prayers that they may get well are those whose illness is dangerous but not necessarily fatal. Many of us can remember the time when some loved one was seriously ill and, while recovery was expected, yet there was grave anxiety. At a time like that, how distressing it is for the family and how depressing for the patient to hear doleful prayers that convey little hope for recovery; often, in fact, those prayers end with a reference to *not* getting well. Here is the Missouri Synod Lutheran prayer, phrased in the first person, "Deliver me from my distress either for the present life or for the life to come." The liturgy of the Reformed Church in America prays that the sick one may be raised up from his bed of pain, or have "a comfortable release" from all his sufferings. The Episcopal rector may read, "restore him to health," and "grant that finally he may dwell with Thee in life everlasting." The Presbyterian pastor will pray to God to "send Thy healing power upon Thy servant," but will then add, "into Thy hands we commit him." This phraseology would inaccurately create the atmosphere of the grave committal service. Even the fine prayer "Before Undergoing an Operation" in *Collects and Prayers* of the United Lutheran Church is a depressing prayer which does not encourage the waiting one to a sure expectation of getting well, but only that "Thou dost order all things well and wilt bless him as he hath need." Surely that will make the poor fellow think that he may die after all. It will not arouse his confidence that he will recover. Religion and psychology certainly can do better than that! In striking contrast is the prayer in *The Lord Thy Helper* of the American Lutheran Church, "Grant me the assurance of faith that it (the operation) may end well," *i. e.*, that it may be successful.

In the name both of religion and psychology, we have the right to wish for prayers which do not suggest that we fear death more deeply than we expect the return of health. Such prayers are poor religion and worse psychology. On the one hand, they reveal a fear that God will not help the sick one to get well. And on the other hand, they put it into the mind of the invalid that he may, indeed, fail to recover.

Doctors today put great emphasis upon the power of suggestion, as the writer learned from experience. In a local hospital recently he was forbidden to see his parishioner. He protested, but the doctor's orders stood. After the lady had recovered, he protested to the doctor, who replied, "I thought she was doing to die." This physician would not risk any suggestion of death from a clergyman.

The third group who need prayers that they may get well are those whose disease is not likely to cause death. We refer to persons who are apt to be sick for a long, long time. There are painful and weakening ills of the body which must be borne and combated for weary months and wretched years. These people are not thinking of death. In many cases they are trying to carry on their work cheerfully. In others they are taking recuperative rest cures. But in each case there is an apprehensive watching over the dangerous resident within their frames and they long for prayers that will bring them daily courage to resist the onslaughts of the enemy and give them hope of recovery. This group forms the greatest multitude of the sick. They spend weary days in pain and discouragement; yet, with all the exquisite art and sympathy of the Church, the prayers produced in the prayer books are far from heartening or hope-inspiring for these tortured people. Magnificent exceptions to these shortcomings are the prayers for the deaf and blind in *Collects and Prayers*.

Finally, those who are quite ill but who normally may be expected to regain health need definite prayers for their recovery. The reader will rightly think at once of accident cases, but other situations also may be brought to mind. People with such illnesses should hear prayers that will seek God's help on the one hand and, on the other, rouse their own spirit and zeal to get well. *Collects and Prayers* contains a fine prayer for one suffering from an accident, but on the whole neither the prayer books nor the extemporaneous prayers of friends or ministers quite meet the need.

Not long ago the writer called upon a lady who had been in a hospital for six weeks with an injury to her leg. She said that she had been visited by three ministers, each one of whom had prayed for her, but not one of them had prayed that she might get well. She was amused, because she was quite capable of praying for herself; but she was also disappointed in the psychological inaptitude of the pastoral ministrations.

The prayers both of the sick person and of those at his side should be directed toward arousing his personality as well as seeking help from heaven. The curative force of medicine itself often is hindered by a sluggish will. Also, it takes a personality stirringly alive to the goodness of God and in devout rapport with Him to make that energizing effort which directs the powers of the inner man to the task of getting well. But we look in vain in the standard books for such petitions—with the grand exception of the prayers in *Liturgy and Agenda* of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. Here are some of its words, phrased in the first person: “O Lord, Thou knowest all my troubles, nor is it hidden from Thee how restless and cast down my soul frequently is. Thou art my God, my Help and my Hope from my youth. I wholly trust in Thee. I flee again unto Thee. I am Thy child, saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Give me at all times a patient spirit, that I may cast my care upon Thee with all cheerfulness and confidence.” Such petitions calm inner restlessness, create hope, and arouse the powers of the personality to lay hold of God in a determined effort to get well.

### III. WHY SHOULD GOD HEAL?

Serious consideration must be given to the fact that many of the prayers ask for healing in order that new spiritual graces may appear in the one who gets well. But is this completely true to God's will for the health of our bodies? We think that it is not. God wants us to have health for health's own sake, as well as for the spiritual opportunities it brings. For instance, look at the prayers which offer ulterior reasons for God's help. In *Collects and Prayers*, the petition is that the sufferer may conform himself to the example of Christ “so that he may follow his Master through suffering.” The liturgy of the Reformed Church in America seems to make its petition for God's healing the sick man “that he may walk before Thee in newness of life.” The same idea is implied in the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*—“so restore him that he may give thanks to Thee in Thy holy Church.”

Other prayers, which contain petitions for health for health's sake, are somewhat better. In the Congregational *Book of Church Services*, the only reason adduced for the cure is that the sick may be “brought back to their accustomed duties”—that is, to the usual activities of their lives.

The Methodist *Pastor's Vade Mecum* asks the Lord our God to send upon the sick one "Thy healing power and virtue," with no mention of spiritual improvement.

These latter prayers are, surely, more true to the psychology of sickness than are the others. The most eager desire the sick man possesses is to get well, and he needs his whole mind for that task. It is not encouraging to him if he is made to think that the good God will help him back to health only if in his pain, weakness and depression he can bring himself to offer to God a return payment, namely, a better life after he is restored. Certainly we cannot find in Scripture such limitations to God's healing grace. This is another case of unfortunate phraseology. Those cured no doubt should give thanks to God and improve their lives in new service and devoutness, as many do; but this determination should not stand out strongly in the prayer for recovery, which may correctly be based solely upon God's will that His servants should get well.

#### IV. WHAT ADDITIONAL PRAYERS ARE NEEDED?

First, petitions for the recovery of unbelievers. The prayers in the books almost without exception speak of the sick as "Thy servant." The Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*, the Episcopal *Common Prayer*, the *Liturgy of the Reformed Church*, the Baptist *Minister's Service Book* all use this term.

Prayers also are needed in which the expectation of answer lies in the petitioner's trust in God rather than that of the patient's. We believe that God will honor the supplications of those who love Him even when the sick person has no faith as, sad to say, often is the case. Why should a believer expect that God will heal an unbeliever? In the hope that he will become a believer? Rather in honor of the deep spiritual understanding of God's love on the part of the believing petitioner, who pleads in the name of Christ the Healer, regardless of the indifference of the one who is sick. In the Epistle of James we are told that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up," and again, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." How often a child of God, burdened with care for a loved one, would resort to a prayer which claimed these promises, were such prayers in print!

Secondly, we can hardly overemphasize the need for prayers in which

the petitioners regard themselves as channels through which God's healing may flow to the sick one. An ever-growing number of people in the Church long to be agents of their God in healing others. They wish that their faith might create faith in the sick and their blazing confidence in the healing Christ might set a flame of faith aglow in the soul of the sick one. They want their trust in the Great Physician to be so warmly evident that it will carry a conviction of recovery through them to the sufferer.

It is true that the prayer books all contain prayers on behalf of the sick, called intercessory prayers, but none are to be found for the use of the growing number of spiritually energetic personalities who wish that God would use the evidence of their enthusiastic confidence to create a similar assurance in the personalities of the sick. We think that the day will come when the prayer books will contain prayers similar to the following from *Healing in the Name of Jesus*, by John Maillard:

"O God, our Father, fill our hearts with Thy great love, that our lives may be as a Divine fire; so that all whom we touch, all for whom we pray, may partake of the Divine warmth and may be perfectly healed in the furnace of holy love."

#### CONCLUSION

A review of these prayer books makes it evident that with regard to the cure of sickness the Church is not clear in its own mind. Some formularies assert that sickness comes from God; others omit that statement. Some make the prayer for patience all important; others do not mention it. Many seem to be designed to prepare for possible death rather than for probable health. They vary in their underlying conceptions of the reasons why God may heal. They fail to supply prayers for many classes of persons. On the whole, they are not very helpful when it comes to getting the sick man well. Let us hope that the time will come when new conceptions of the Church's mission in this respect will produce new prayers.

# A Critique of the Principle of Continuity

JOSEPH HAROUTUNIAN

**I**N A SERIES of rather uncomplimentary remarks about humanism, liberalism, Calvinism and Barthianism, on page 33 of his *Realistic Theology*, Walter M. Horton makes the following statement: "The idea of *continuity*, of the unity of all things in God, runs through this whole movement [liberalism] from Bushnell to King—as the idea of *discontinuity* runs through the thought of Karl Barth, its great antagonist. In my opinion, we cannot afford to abandon this central idea of liberalism, however we may be forced to qualify it." I think this is a true statement of the heart of the controversy between liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. And I believe that a proper analysis of the principle of continuity will reveal both the strength and weakness of liberalism, and may even help us to clarify the soot-laden air of theological controversy in our day.

## I

1. The first application of the principle of continuity came in the Deistic conception of the relationship between religion and morality. As is well known, in Deism, religion was considered a necessary support for morality. The great end of man was a virtuous life. It seemed that virtue demanded belief in "God, freedom and immortality." Therefore, God was conceived as the great moral governor who meted out rewards and punishments according to the good and evil done by men, and fulfilled His justice both in this world and in the next. Thus morality was the end of religion and religion the ground of morality. Religion and morality constituted a continuous realm of discourse, and inseparable parts of a whole. Such Deism was directed against ecclesiastical religion, much of which seemed to have no moral significance and produced unnecessary evils like superstition and "enthusiasm."

2. It was discovered that reason and religion are also continuous. The Deists propounded a "natural religion" which seemed to be rational and free from the mysterious and miraculous elements in orthodoxy. Eighteenth-century common sense regarded it as eminently rational to be

virtuous, to cultivate virtue knowing that it is rewarded with happiness, as that vice is punished with misery. The Deists were deeply convinced that anything in religion contrary to common sense was either malicious or "indifferent." Even those who believed in prophecy and miracles did so with the presumption that the republication of natural or rational religion might well have been attended by supranatural phenomena. It was reasonable to believe in prophecy or miracles, but it was self-evident that nothing unreasonable was essential to religion.

3. But it soon became evident that a Deity who governs the world according to set mechanical laws and who has provided an adequate cause for every effect might well have desisted from performing the miracles of the Christian faith. The principle of continuity was here applied to the physical world, and it was deemed highly improbable that events contrary to the ordinary course of nature ever happened. Thus emerged that *deus in absentia* who, having created the universe and set its machinery going, had retired to enjoy an indefinitely prolonged sabbath.

4. By the end of the eighteenth century, the literary criticism of the Bible was combined with the moralism and rationalism of the Deistic movement, and then emerged the "higher criticism" of the Bible. The criteria of historical criticism applied to secular history were applied also to biblical history. The older conception of a unique history contained in the Bible, revealing a special divine providence and shot through with miraculous events, was put aside. Thus the miracle stories of the Bible were disqualified as revealing human stupidity rather than divine providence.

5. However, it was evident that the same people who were credulous enough to believe in miracles were capable of considerable insight into morality, and further evident that Jesus of Nazareth who excelled all others in his moral genius had left behind him moral teachings which were eminently rational and acceptable. Johann Gottlieb Herder saw the Bible as describing the moral education of mankind, culminating in the work of the superb genius of the Nazarene. This developmental theory was established by the disciples of Hegel, and became essential to "higher criticism." Now the Bible was seen as a library in which the scholar studied the development of Hebrew and Christian ideas about God and the good life, and explained the apparently supernatural elements in the Bible in terms of primitive psychology, individual and social. Thus, in the Bible the student saw a gradual process of discovery which he also considered

as a progressive revelation of God conceived primarily as a transcendent spiritual ideal. In this way the traditional problem of the revealed and the discovered, the natural and the supernatural, the Divine and the human, was eliminated. The faith that there is a God, a living God, who can and will set Himself to do what man or nature cannot accomplish, was set aside. Divine activity was discerned exclusively in the progressive operations of man and nature according to established and well-known modes of behavior.

6. The principle of "through man to God" was at once enlarged and fortified by the discovery of evolution in nature. It was now recognized that the historical development of mankind was preceded by a long process of natural evolution: from matter to life, from life to mind, and from mind to spirit. In a cosmic process of integration and differentiation, resulting in the emergence of countless creatures in the heavens and upon the earth, the religious man discerned a cosmic creative purpose, a God immanent in the world and producing beauty and goodness, gradually and according to a discernible even though ideal pattern. Of course, the thinkers who made the evolutionary theory the keystone of their theology did not carry their cosmological monism so far as to repudiate "the transcendence" of God. They insisted that God is transcendent as well as immanent. And they conceived the transcendent deity as more of the immanent, revealing Himself *partly* in man and nature, in all things "beautiful, good and true." They explained most evil as necessary in a process moving toward good without evil, and thus they saw the world as a dynamic hierarchy of goods. The problem of sin became absorbed by "the problem of evil," and evil became a lesser good in a continuous process of betterment.

The principle of continuity now began to be used against agnosticism and atheism as follows:

1. This principle demands that the universe be of one piece. Hence, phenomena observable in some parts of nature must have adequate and specifically similar causes in another. Life requires a vitalistic interpretation of the whirling nebulae and all the atoms in them. Mind in man requires intelligence in the whole of cosmos. Spirit in man requires a "spiritual interpretation of the universe." In short, the universe, for such it necessarily is, must be interpreted in terms of the highest in it—that is, man; and "the ground of the universe," or "ultimate reality," or God, must be assumed to be anthropomorphic, endowed with intelligence, will

and emotion. And by the principle of sufficient causation, He must be superior to man.

2. The case for the reality of God was often made to rest upon the theory that there is a continuity between human experience and the world in which it occurs. As the "realists" in philosophy argued for qualitative and intellectual elements in the objects of perception and thought, so the "realists" in theology argued that there must be an object corresponding to the experience of the sublime, or the sacred, or the holy. Thus the "realists" made God an object of human experience, and claimed for Him a reality comparable to that possessed by any object in nature. Surely, if men can believe that they see a flower because one is before them, why should they not believe that we have an "experience of God" because there is such a Being? The principle of continuity made it possible to circumvent Kant's critique of the "proofs" for the existence of God and to answer the atheists' charge that the religious person is irrational and superstitious. It also gave religion an appearance of "scientific" validity and enabled the theologian to maintain his self-respect among the high priests of our age—that is, the scientists.

3. The principle of continuity as applied to moral experience and its object was preferred by those who were not impressed with the claims of a unique species of experience called religious. The idea of God was here used in connection with an objective realm of values and value-producing reality. The valuable, the worthy or the good was considered as an object of experience, either in a Platonic or an "empirical" sense. Some contemplated a Good producing goods, and transcending them; and some were content with a good process immanent in total reality. But common to both sides was the conviction that good for man and good in a reality outside of man are parts of a continuous and unitary good.

Before passing on to a critique of the principle of continuity, let us pause a moment to explicate the fact that this principle is the chief weapon which the liberals have used against both naturalistic or "religious" humanism and "the Barthian theology." The humanists and the Barthians seem to be two extremes in religious thought. Yet, as against liberalism, they agree in their refusal to go "from nature to God." Both are deeply impressed with a tension between man and nature and share a somber view of the promiscuous creation and destruction of men in and by "nature." A Bertrand Russell and a Karl Barth are aware of an ultimate discontinuity

between man and nature as symbolized and dramatized by death. Death is seen as that which sets nature against man for whom there is no good without life. Russell, Otto and others advocate a policy of *cultivez le jardin* so that men may live well while life lasts; Karl Barth, like Augustine and Pascal, recognizes that men cannot live well in the midst of death and without faith in Him who conquered death in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The former choose to live without faith; the latter can find no choice but faith. The liberal theologian uses the principle of continuity as a two-edged sword and sets himself to demolish both the "atheism" of the humanist and the "irrationalism" of the Barthian. He prefers "experience" to both faith and reason, and thus evades the unbelief of the humanist on the one hand, and the faith of the Barthian on the other. He sees what he believes and believes what he sees. The principle of continuity is absolutely essential to such prodigious performance by the human mind.

## II

Let us now examine the above analysis of the modern religious use of the principle of continuity and see if we cannot distinguish between the tenable and the untenable elements in it.

1. It is a commonplace of Christian thought that morality is integral to religion. The love of God and the love of the neighbor are mutually inseparable, and neither dogma nor cult are substitutes for righteousness. "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." So far the Deists re-emphasized biblical religion. But they went further. In making virtue the primary element in religion, the Deists confused English common sense with biblical righteousness, and made God the custodian of commonplace morality. They loved virtue rather than God and preferred benevolence to justice. They were interested in social harmony first and in the worship of God second. They sought happiness first and obedience to God second. Thus they initiated the modern prejudice that religion has its sole end in virtue and happiness. It was soon found that men can practice virtue without Divine sanctions, and that they can even enjoy life without being unduly virtuous; and the religion of "God, freedom and immortality" became a pomp and a pose. "The righteousness of God" having become continuous with public virtue, religion became indifferent; naturally, men turned away from it in boredom.

The biblical man worshiped God because He is the Lord of life and

destiny, and not merely because he sought "a virtuous life." God, the Creator of all, is the proper object of attention on the part of the creature.

There is a discontinuity between Christianity and the pursuit of "the good life" as contemplated by the Deists and their successors. The liberal emphasis upon the ethical element in religion is indispensable, but its willingness to make religion instrumental to morality is a distortion and perversion of Christianity. The living and sovereign God must be obeyed because He is absolutely worthy of obedience, which is the "last end" sought by the Christian man. Thus, Christianity is essentially theocentric. The Kingdom of God comes first; happiness as conceived by the best of men comes second. The Christian man's mind is turned toward obedience to God, and not toward virtue, or a certain moral quality of life which men recognize as good in itself. Lest this distinction be thought too fine and worthless, it must be added that in Christianity virtue and "eternal life" are neither identical nor separable from each other. Obedience to God differs from virtue as "eternal life" differs from a life of dying. Obedience to God is "eternal life" and not a means to it; virtue, the goodness accomplished by men, shares the vanity of a life ending in death. A mentality which is interested in God and immortality only secondarily and only for the sake of balancing the scales of justice is essentially different from one which is bent upon serving God and enjoying Him forever.

2. The Deistic-liberal insistence upon a continuity between reason and religion demands close attention. Reasonless religion was repudiated once for all by St. Paul who said: "I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." (I Corinthians 14:15.) Praying, singing or any other "experience" without understanding is not Christian. But that Christianity is a rational religion in the sense that "common sense" embraces it happily and willingly is not true. "Common sense" or reason belongs in the sphere of "the flesh" which is in enmity against the spirit of God. The Christian life is a dying to that common sense which presents us with a eudaemonistic ideal and not with the way of the Cross. Suffering is integral to the Christian mind, while for "reason" it is merely an evil to be overcome. We need not elaborate this thesis. As St. Paul saw, the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men stand in opposition to each other. The Christian is considered a fool in this world. There is an essential

discontinuity between Christianity and any man's "rational desires." Christianity is not the product of any man's reason. It is God in Christ Jesus addressing Himself to human reason, condemning it and calling it to repentance. The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' conception of God as He who loves the sinners, the early Christian glorying in the Cross and the way of the Cross are God's wisdom to the believer and supreme nonsense to the unbeliever. As a call to repentance addressed to human reason in the service of "human nature," Christianity is absolutely discontinuous with reason.

The continuity between God and man is established by God, in repentance. Man is at all times and at once rational and sinful. By virtue of reason, he can hear God's word as stones or birds presumably cannot hear. Because of his sin, he stands in opposition to God's word and cannot hear God's word except as a word of forgiveness and deliverance. The sinful man's reason is therefore opposed to and discontinuous with the mind and will of God. It is not permissible for a Christian to forget that he is not "reason" without sin, and that the knowledge of God is at all times that knowledge whereby he recognizes himself as involved in sin and death, and rejoices in that God is his Father, by faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. When sin and death are taken seriously in any Christian discussion of the knowledge of God, the Deistic conception of the function of reason in religion, which remains the liberal conception, appears as superficial and a continuous source of confusion. The Christian man, says St. Paul, is neither rational nor irrational in the Deistic sense, because the Cross of Christ creates an orientation, a reason, a reasoning, which are "beyond reason" as it operates in one who is not confronted by sin and death as revealed by that Cross. So long as the liberal insists on discussing the problem of the knowledge of God before and even independently of a discussion of the problem of sin and death, he cannot have a biblical view of the continuity and discontinuity between reason and religion.

3. Assuming that nature and history, and the Bible and other literature are continuous, modern thinkers have repudiated prophecy and miracles as contrary to observed behavior of man and nature. Now, that the Bible contains *post facto* statements construed as foresight, and miracle stories which are products of credulity cannot be denied. Besides, there is no religious value in believing the impossible or the unlikely, merely because it is impossible or unlikely. It is to the credit of modern religion that it

distinguished between religion and superstition. We trust that this contribution of "liberalism" to Christianity will never be lost.

But it is evident that a nonmiraculous Christianity is no Christianity at all. The forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead are not within the power of man or nature. If there be no living God who is the Lord of man and nature, so that *He* can do what is impossible for both, then Christianity is essentially a vanity. If Christ is not risen from the dead, neither shall *we* arise from the dead. If we shall not arise from the dead, then life shall be swallowed by death. If so, then God is not stronger than death—that is, He is not God. Then it is sin who is god, and death which reigns with him.

The Christian faith is trust in God as *He* who has triumphed in Christ Jesus over sin, death, the law, the world, the devil and his hell. In a soteriological religion like Christianity, miracle is essential. Hence, faith is essential. Faith in God and faith in miracle cannot be divorced from each other. God the Creator is God the Saviour, and God the Saviour saves men from sin and death because He is God the Creator. Together with the first full statements of the idea of God the Creator in Isaiah, chapters 40-66, we have the most emphatic and extreme statements of God's sovereignty and His power to save His people. God the Creator is the miracle-working God, and faith in Him is essentially the belief that He is capable of doing the otherwise impossible: the deliverance of the people from sin and a life of death. Belief in miracle is one piece with belief in God who is the Lord of man and nature, for whose redemption all creatures wait, groaning and travailing "in pain together until now." As sin and righteousness, and life and death are discontinuous, so are miracle and "the order of nature," God the Creator and man the creature.

We say these things not because we wish to revive the principle of *credo quia absurdum*, but because it is no longer possible to deny that faith is inseparable from a conviction of the discontinuity between the Creator and the creature. At the same time, it cannot be denied that "the supernaturalism" of those who turn a miracle into an event in nature can no longer stand. The central miracle of the resurrection—forgiveness—occurs to nature and not in nature—that is, it is real as an act of God, and not as a surprising effect produced by nature. It never becomes a natural prodigy which can be described as one phenomenon among others. Therefore, there is no literal way of stating it, because the letter of words refers to nature

and to things in nature, and not to the action of God upon nature, whereby the Eternal and the temporal are united as "event." Our ideas of miracle must always remain complex and paradoxical, holding the mind in a state of tension. Words like forgiveness and resurrection are at once symbols of our faith and of our ignorance. They are words wherewith we confess our faith in God the Creator and Saviour, believing that God knows what they mean. We see by faith, rather we believe that we are seen and saved.

Such faith is neither credulity nor superstition. It is a confession of the mystery of Jesus Christ. Credulity is to believe in him who is not to be believed in. Superstition is to believe that there are things which are not, and events which do not occur. Credulity and superstition concern the creature; faith concerns God the Creator, and is generically and essentially different from either superstition or unbelief. Faith is the confrontation of God and man, which reveals at once their continuity and discontinuity—that is, the miracle of forgiveness and resurrection.

4. Reason without faith, in the sense indicated so far, is rightly impressed by the elements of continuity between biblical ideas and the ethnic religions in the Near East. Biblical history is a part of world history; biblical religion is one of the religions of mankind. Hence, the historical study of the Bible has been a source of great insight into "the process of religion." And yet it is evident that some naïve historians have drawn palpably erroneous conclusions from it. As Soderblom and Karl Holl and Albright have shown, biblical religion, in essence and *in toto*, is unique. The theistic-ethical-eschatological complex which is religion as seen in the Bible as a whole is without parallel. It is a surprise and stumbling block to reason. As the biblical Hebrews and the early Christians saw, there was a radical difference between their God and the god of the nations and religions around. A profound discontinuity between the Bible and any other book not dependent on it, between the mind of the Bible and any "natural" mind, between the soul of the Hebrews and the soul of the others, is a fact which can no longer be obscured by a theory to the effect that such discontinuity cannot be. There is only one Jesus Christ, and one faith emanating from Him.

5. That there was development, due to environmental conditions, in biblical religion cannot be gainsaid. However, the actual process of this development is by no means clearly defined. The process of religion from Abraham to Moses, to Elijah, to Ezekiel, to Jesus, to Paul, cannot be fitted

into any pattern of evolutionary principles. Biblical history reveals not so much *development*, as Providence operating in different situations. The continuity discovered in the Bible is one of God's acts in human history, and not one of a steady, evolutionary development of religious ideas. The process of Hebrew history is repeatedly modified by divine acts which are genuine initiations by the living God, and are in origin and process discontinuous with the process of "natural history." It was not a principle of growth, but the exigencies of Hebrew history, contact with Tyre or the Babylonian exile, as met by men who recognized the hand of God in human life, that produced the several aspects of biblical religion. It is one thing to recognize that sometimes one generation profits from the experience of another; it is quite another thing to fit history into a pattern of development, especially when this pattern is one of moral progress. The development of moral ideals must be seen in juxtaposition with the awful problem of right conduct which remains constant and exposes each generation, rather each man, to the wrath of God and constrains us to trust in *Him*. The proper perspective in biblical study is to recognize the reality of God, man and nature, and thus to allow for both continuity and discontinuity in Hebrew-Christian history. Otherwise, history is distorted and the biblical historian becomes a propagandist of his own prejudices, seeing discontinuity where there is continuity, as in the case of the Fundamentalists; or seeing continuity where there is discontinuity as in much of contemporary "higher criticism."

6. In their passion for the principle of continuity, the modern thinkers embraced a cosmic, evolutionary monism which puts God, man and the whole of creation into a "system" or "process" of "nature." They saw only differences in degree, and repudiated differences in kind, especially between God and man. Now, the continuities between man and beast are too well known to need repetition. But in failing to recognize the discontinuity between them, modern thinkers distorted the facts and vitiated the classic insights of western philosophy and theology, which recognized human rationality and moral agency as facts discontinuous with the rest of creation, as a special act of Divine creativity impressing upon man God's own "image." As Irving Babbitt has argued so well, the classical humanistic and Hebrew-Christian tradition stand in opposition to modern naturalism in their insight that the essence of man is not the same as that of a beast. As to God and man, there is a continuity between them as

suggested by *imago dei*; God deals with man as he does not deal with cat, cactus or quartz. Nevertheless, it is a fundamental biblical idea that human sin introduces a discontinuity between man and God, a discontinuity which can be remedied only by God, by His forgiving and redeeming love. God is Creator, man creature; God provides, man is provided for; God is faithful, man rebellious; God is living, man dies; God is free, man is in bondage; God delivers, man is delivered. The whole of biblical religion is saturated with the consciousness of such discontinuities, which were of course impossible except for the original and ideal continuity between God and His "image."

The use of the principle of continuity for the purpose of "a spiritual interpretation of the universe," which is very dear to the modern Christian thinker, is entirely legitimate in the setting of the Church's faith in God. Given faith in the living God, the kinship of God and man as "spirits" is an unavoidable conviction. The divine-human relationship, *in faith*, makes an anthropomorphic interpretation of "the ground of the universe" inevitable. Such an interpretation is faith made explicit, and it is essential to Christianity. However, as a logical argument from man to God, it is insufficient and inconclusive: insufficient because it confronts us with less than the living God, and inconclusive because it cannot "prove" the existence of the God of the Christians. "From man to God" is valid as a corollary of faith, and is legitimate as a consequence of "from God to man." But it constrains no one to believe in the living God unless one be already in the hands of Him who forgives sin and raises the dead. Only forgiven sinners can take a "spiritual interpretation of the universe" seriously. The cosmic validity of the "spiritual ideals" of man is problematic except to the believer who stands before God the Judge and Saviour, the Enemy and Friend. The projection of human ideals into the cosmos must remain illegitimate except as the work of faith which is aware of God's standing judgment upon man's idolatry and sin. Here again the situation is complex. The spiritual interpretation of the universe is necessary and valid because we are at once at home and strangers in this world. It is the product of a faith which reflects the permanent tension between desire and destiny.

7. The epistemological use of this principle confronts us with a similar situation. "Animal faith" and philosophical realism supply the theologian with good reason for arguing that religious experience has a corresponding

object. There are aspects of the world of human experience which are terrifying, awesome, sublime, glorious or holy. There is even justification for the intuition that the world, in its "dimension of depth" partakes of qualities corresponding to religious experience. There seems to be no obvious way in which the realistic principle can be applied to one phase of life and not to another. So far, therefore, there can be no constraining objection to "religious realism" which is in vogue in our day.

However, as soon as the object of religious experience is distinguished from our common world, as is required for any genuine theism, a discontinuity between experience and its object comes to our attention, and we have to recognize that we *believe* rather than *perceive* that God exists. The existence of the Deity is a matter of faith, although His attributes are discovered through His action in the world of experience. The qualities of experience discussed by the religious realists are simply what they are. Being attached to objects of human perception, they are in nature. And when they are abstracted from events, they become "Platonic ideas," which by further abstraction yield "the Idea of the Holy" or "Cosmic Righteousness" or "the Worshipful One," etc. There is no going from experience to "the living God" by way of "the empirical method" which these realists appropriate and pretend to use in their theological "science." In this respect, epistemological religious realism has nothing to contribute to the question of the existence of "the God of the Christians." If one does not believe that God exists, there is no demonstrable way from "the idea of the holy" to the "holy God of Israel." When one does believe it, the God of Israel is known as holy in His dealings with His people, in the world of fact or experience. God is the Subject who reveals Himself in faith and His acts and attributes in experience. Such is the proper relationship between faith and experience in the Christian life.

In fact, "religious realism" places the problem of faith and knowledge with regard to God in a confusing light. Claiming an "experience of God," it exposes itself to the criticism that such experience is dependent upon a prior belief in God's existence. Thus faith and experience are opposed to each other as alternative *human* ways of apprehending God, and ground is given to the atheists' view that faith is superstition. The pretense of experiencing God as one experiences a matter of sight or hearing, and the denial of such experience are based upon profoundly erroneous views of God as one among many, and must be set aside when it is recognized that

God is the unconditioned Condition of all faith and experience. God is the author of experience, and not a deduction from it, and one can make such a statement only by faith. Strictly speaking, nothing experienced is God. We can say only that we believe God speaks to us in our experience, revealing His judgment and mercy, addressing us with His threats and promises in particular situations and concerning our ultimate destiny. But such belief is a movement of human life in which knowledge, conviction, repentance, decision, submission, fear, trust, hope, etc., are rolled into one transcendent "experience," into one "existential" confrontation with the living God who is at once hidden and revealed to sinful and dying men. That God should speak to men in such "experience" bespeaks the validity of the principle of continuity, but that God should speak to us as our Creator, Judge and Saviour bespeaks the validity of the principle of discontinuity. And since to know God is to know Him as Creator, Judge and Saviour, such knowledge is of faith and unto faith. The fact of sin-death is the nemesis of the principle of continuity, except as God Himself establishes a continuity between Himself and us in the forgiveness of our sins and our resurrection from the dead; but this continuity we affirm by faith.

The sum of the matter is this: The liberal will do well to hold fast to the principle of continuity in the following respects:

1. The revelation of God in Christ is, by faith, also a revelation in man and history and nature—the revelation of the meaning of all things. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." The Christian teaching is that God is the Creator and Lord of all, and in this sense we may well speak of the "unity of all things in God." Without Christ, man and nature hide God from us because of our sin; in Christ they reveal God, through the Cross and the Resurrection, and confront us with the Creator, Judge and Redeemer. Not only "religious experience," but all experience, under Christ and by faith, is the revelation of God. The liberal, if anything, needs to extend the principle of continuity to all the aspects of human life.

2. The humanity of Christ, the continuity between Him and every man, is essential to the relevance of the law of God, which He obeyed and we disobey, to all "intelligent creation." Our sin confronts us with an inescapable responsibility before God because goodness is the same for God and Christ and us, because we are created in the image of God, because there is no "natural necessity" which binds us to sin as there was

none which bound Christ to it. And hence it is that our hope for life and righteousness rests upon Christ's victory over sin, the devil and death, to the glory of God the Father.

3. The contrast between God's righteousness and human sin may not be so construed as to deny the power of God the Holy Spirit. God's sovereignty means that in Christ He transmutes evil into good and His love triumphs over the evil we do, so that we are commanded: "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." A mysterious continuity between God, Christ, the Church and the believer is a fact which cannot be denied by one who professes belief in the sovereignty of God the Father.

On the other hand, the principle of continuity must be repudiated with enthusiasm in the following respects:

1. Human sin renders reason incapable of "going from nature to God." *Credo ut intelligam* is the first principle of human thought about God. When man is confronted with the revelation of God in the Bible, confronted with it in his sin and confusion, without evasion or reservation, God Himself reveals Himself to him, as Creator, Judge and Redeemer, by faith in Christ, and "proves" His own existence by persuading him with His sovereign love. The usual "arguments for the existence of God" can be retained only as applications of *credo ut intelligam*. The proper way to go to God is with one's sin as well as one's reason; but one cannot go to God thus except as God meets one with His word in the Scriptures.

2. The liberal must set aside this principle insofar as it amounts to a denial of God's sovereignty and His power to perform whatever His love dictates. The Christian faith in the forgiveness of sins and resurrection of the dead, which are possible for God alone to perform, necessitates faith in discontinuity of power and purpose between God and "nature." To deny this discontinuity is to deny the Church's faith and hope; it is to admit that Christianity is not the answer to man's ultimate questions; it is to admit that Jesus Christ is not the Saviour of the world, that His gospel is not the good news to mankind walking and suffering in the "valley of the shadow of death." Faith in God, confidence in Him, trust in His goodness and His power, which is the one foundation for our evangelical hope "that to them that love God all things work together for good," leads us to rejoice that God is God, and not man nor nature.

3. "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son," in

its proper setting of "the Christian Epic," from the doctrine of creation to the doctrine of the world-to-come, is a gospel to the world, and not a religion of the world. *The Christian's first concern is with God, and not with comparative study of human ideas about God.* Religions are many, and Christianity is one of them, with much in common with the others. But God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is God alone, for He alone is the One about whom we can say, with all our heart and mind and strength: "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee." At this point, the principle of continuity is shattered to pieces, and the creature stands before the Creator.

# Harry Emerson Fosdick and Reinhold Niebuhr: A Contrast in the Methods of the Teaching Preacher

ERDMAN HARRIS

**T**HIS paper must begin with an acknowledgment of the respect and affection which the writer holds for both Harry Emerson Fosdick and Reinhold Niebuhr. The writer realizes that both men have made inestimable contributions to the religious life of this generation. He believes that an analysis of their methods of work should be helpful to any engaged in the task of preaching and teaching today. He is interested not only in the *why* and the *what* of religious instruction, but also in the *how*. His contention is that the two men under discussion represent an interesting *contrast* in their approach to the problem of the public presentation of Christianity, and that others may learn how to secure more effective results by an examination of that contrast. It goes without saying that the methods employed by each man *are* extraordinarily effective. It would be foolish to try to imitate either. One can learn from another not by copying but by having his attention called to certain principles of study, style or delivery. One can learn from Fosdick and Niebuhr to be, more effectively, himself.

This paradox is true in the musical realm. The composer Saint-Saens could imitate the style of his predecessors and contemporaries so felicitously that he could fool most of his listeners into believing that they were actually hearing unfamiliar compositions by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven or Brahms. He knew the methods by which they gained their effects—but he also could compose in his own right. Actually, his knowledge of other composers helped him to be *original*, to compose soundly and successfully. The landscape painters of Canada, formerly known as the Group of Seven, learned much from each other and belonged to a single school—though the work of each is creative and original, and can be distinguished by those at all familiar with the work of the group.

Furthermore, as we shall see, the contrast between the methods of Fosdick and Niebuhr is not so sharp but that we can find Niebuhrian accents in Fosdick and Fosdickian accents in Niebuhr, and where the two men

differ one feels like echoing Niebuhr's dedication of "Beyond Tragedy" to Sherwood Eddy and William Scarlett: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord!" And I think Niebuhr borrowed that from someone else.

To make my problem simpler, I am not primarily contrasting the message of Fosdick with the message of Niebuhr. On the matter of their message, one thing ought to be recognized. As one reads their books afresh, as I have done recently, he is impressed with the balance and comprehensiveness of their Christian witness. Both have an unusually full-orbed gospel. Neither is really one-sided. Listen to this passage:

"Essential human nature is much the same wherever it is found, and it is as false and dangerous to glorify the proletariat as it is to play sycophant to the privileged. Sin is 'no respecter of persons.' Its demonic, corrupting power runs through all classes, and no realistic mind can suppose virtue to be preponderant in any special group, even the downtrodden." Who said that? That was spoken by Doctor Fosdick in 1936.

"When our class is favored, when it receives support and distinction from the *status quo*, we are almost irresistibly tempted to mass and marshal our thought in support of it. *Most of our thinking about social questions is done, not individually or rationally, but by pressure of class interests.*" That is Doctor Fosdick again.

"This unescapable fact, which again and again in Christian history has called modernism to its senses, we face: we cannot harmonize Christ Himself with modern culture. What Christ does to modern culture is to challenge it." Fosdick again; and in case anyone should think that all of this side of his thinking has been called out by the overwhelming bitterness of these latter years, listen to this, spoken in 1921:

"We are handling the same unescapable experience out of which the old doctrine of original sin first came, we are dealing with the same fundamental fact which Paul was facing when he said: 'As in Adam all die': that humanity's sinful nature is not something which you and I alone make up by individual deeds of wrong, but that it is an inherited mortgage and handicap on the whole human family."

Now listen to this, by way of contrast:

"Modern humanism was as truly religious in some of its affirmations as in some of its criticisms. It affirmed that men possessed a common humanity in their common needs. That great spirit of early humanism,

Shakespeare, expresses this idea perfectly in the mouth of Shylock: ‘Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed by the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die, and if you wrong us shall we not have revenge?’ High cultural elaborations, including religious ones, are always in danger of forgetting this simple fact. It is not only ‘in Christ,’ that is ultimately, that men are one; they are one immediately in creation. ‘God has made of one blood all the nations of men.’” That is Professor Niebuhr in 1936.

Or again: “It makes a difference whether men are good or evil and whether they do good or evil. In spite of all moral relativism we know fairly well what good and evil are. Utilitarian moral schemes may justify egotism to a larger degree than the gospel ethic. But there is no system of morals which does not in some way or other give moral preference to the other-regarding rather than the self-regarding act. We know that it is good to restrain the sinful tendency of the self—to live its life at the expense of other life—and to strengthen the impulses by which it is bound to other life. Love is the law of life and not merely some transcendent ideal of perfection.” That is Professor Niebuhr again. And this and kindred passages should be sufficient to meet the strictures made by a critic that Niebuhr tends to minimize the moral distinctions among men in the interests of his main contention that all men stand equally under the judgment of a righteous and holy God. The trouble is that too many critics of both Fosdick and Niebuhr make up their minds on the basis of certain isolated and colorful utterances and do not take the trouble to study the complete architecture of their thought, which appears when one studies the nine major books of Niebuhr and the eighteen works of Harry Emerson Fosdick.

That is all I shall write about the specific moral and theological content of their approach. I am more interested here in examining their methods. And here we do find some interesting contrasts. Let us examine *two* of them.

We may approach the first through a study of one difference between Shakespeare and Ibsen as dramatists. Just for fun the other evening, I reread the long article on Shakespeare in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Shakespeare apparently had this in common with Gilbert and Sullivan and most preachers, that he wrote to meet a deadline. But that has nothing to do with the one simple point I have in mind. My point is that, as far as we can gather, Shakespeare himself was not so much interested in suggesting interpretations of life and culture radically different from those who saw his plays. He wrote, in this order apparently, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear* and *Macbeth*, to name just five tragedies, including the four major ones. Those five tragedies are, of course, a mine of apt quotations. There is, however, no evidence that Shakespeare tried to challenge the basic assumptions of the most farsighted of his Elizabethan audience. People came to *Othello* for the most part believing that jealousy was a bad thing. Shakespeare set that conviction before them in such matchless form that people were even more convinced than before that their own half-formed or unconsciously accepted standards were true. I all but vowed, the last time I saw *Othello*, that I never wanted to see it again. I always have a peculiar feeling as I witness the play that I may lose control of myself in the closing moments and, seeing Othello approach Desdemona's bed to strangle her, will rise in the audience and cry: "Stop! you fool, she isn't guilty! Investigate Iago." Shakespeare, in one sense, was a teacher, but largely because he set forth familiar ideas in a new and convincing form. And in this connection, a wise remark was made by Albert Schweitzer when he said: "Just as a tree brings forth each year the same leaves but leaves which are forever new, so must all permanently useful ideas be born again in thought."

Ibsen's dramatic method was different, because his intent was different. If Shakespeare could count on ninety per cent of his audience's agreement with his basic assumptions, Ibsen could count on ninety per cent disagreement when his plays were first produced. What Ibsen did was to challenge the assumptions of his Victorian audience head-on.

One can see this clearly by rereading *A Doll's House* or *Ghosts* or *An Enemy of the People*. In *The Wild Duck* Ibsen takes a fling at the idea that honesty of speech is the best policy, and shows how (or tries to show how) a marriage which was proceeding successfully on the basis of a closed closet containing a figurative skeleton was spoiled and embittered by opening the closet and viewing the skeleton. Ibsen's ideas do not seem particularly shocking to us today. But they did in his day. They might not have been so shocking at certain earlier epochs, but they were in his

own time. His primary teaching device was to startle his hearers out of their complacency and persuade them to examine the assumptions on which they had been proceeding.

This dramatic contrast fails to do justice to analogous contrasts in preaching in that all preachers are propagandists whereas some dramatists are not. But the application to preaching is this: some ministers are chiefly intent in their sermons on getting their hearers to take the ideals which they already believe in verbally, but which they have placed temporarily in cold storage, and get them out of cold storage, warm them up and use them again. Other preachers are chiefly intent upon showing that the ideals and ideas by which people have been nourishing their lives must themselves be modified or scrapped. Every preacher worth his salt uses *both methods*, but if one examines the bulk of a minister's utterances you will usually find that he considers his task chiefly the one or the other.

In spite of the fact that Doctor Fosdick has been a champion for many advanced and sometimes unpopular causes, the bulk of his preaching has been devoted to the task of challenging his congregations to make certain ideals and ideas, which they hold in cold storage or to which they give mere lip service, or which they know are a part of the rich Christian heritage, genuinely ruling in their hearts. One of the best examples of this type of preaching is to be found in a sermon entitled "The Cross and the Ordinary Man: a Palm Sunday Sermon," which appears in a collection entitled *Successful Christian Living*, and published in 1937. It is a remarkably cogent sermon. Here is a paragraph from the introduction to it:

"This morning we seek some element in the experience of the cross so universal that it must be real to us in our daily life. Note, then, that what Jesus did when He went to the cross was something that no one could have required of Him. No laws could be passed coercing a man to sacrifice himself like that, and were such laws passed they could not be enforced. In going to the cross Jesus was taking on Himself something that no one could demand. He was moving—that is, in the great realm of unenforceable obligations."

Doctor Fosdick then tells the story of a wireless operator who kept at his post on a burning ship far beyond the time which could have been required of him even by the high tradition of the sea and tells of his saying, "I intend to stand by my post"—a decision which no one could have demanded of him. The sermon proceeds: "Even our ordinary life is pretty

much made up of two things: enforceable and unenforceable obligations, on the one side, conduct that the laws of court or custom can demand; and on the other, the ways of living that no laws and no codes of custom ever can require." Doctor Fosdick quotes Lord Moulton's appeal to the English people: "The greatness of a nation lies in the number of its citizens who can be trusted to obey self-imposed law."

Now this concept is perfectly simple. When it is stated, it is immediately accepted by any intelligent person. The genius of the sermon is that it illustrates and drives home this generalization by thirteen of the most cogent examples any preacher could collect, and sends many of the congregation out with the consciousness that they have not been faithful in their obedience to unenforceable laws and the conviction that they ought to do better. It is a fine specimen of what one might call without misunderstanding, as I have defined it, a Shakespearean sermon. Twenty-four of the twenty-five sermons in the volume, *Successful Christian Living*, are more or less of this character.

Reinhold Niebuhr is much more akin to Ibsen. While Harpers was publishing Doctor Fosdick's *Successful Christian Living*, Scribners was publishing Professor Niebuhr's *Beyond Tragedy*, a collection of fifteen essays based upon sermons preached during the few years immediately preceding 1937. These volumes are, therefore, contemporaneous. As one studies the fifteen chapters of *Beyond Tragedy*, he is bound to be impressed by the difference in approach. None of them can be summarized by a simple, reasonable, understandable aphorism. None of them involve what I have called the Shakespearean technique of taking a theme which many would assume as true and then bringing it home with vividness and poignancy. Especially at the time they were delivered, these sermons challenged the fundamental assumptions on which modern Christians were basing their world view and their way of living. To numbers of listeners, the sermons were provoking, not to say startling or shocking. Their keynote is the "paradox," and the first sermon begins with this sentence: "Among the paradoxes with which St. Paul describes the character, the vicissitudes and the faith of the Christian ministry, the phrase 'as deceivers, yet true' is particularly intriguing."

Niebuhr then proceeds to say that every apologist for Christianity teaches the truth by deception. The hearers say, "What is that again?" Niebuhr maintains that "We are deceivers yet true when we say that God

created the world." Later he says, "We are deceivers yet true when we say that men fell into evil." Later on still he says, "We are deceivers yet true when we declare that Christ will come again at the last judgment." He clarifies considerably what he means by all this, but his explanations sometimes irritate and provoke a modern man whose desire is to make his philosophy of life reasonable to himself and others. Niebuhr then proceeds, in the other sermons, to challenge, one by one, many of the affirmations of a liberally trained college graduate. Often he appears to go too far. His transvaluation of values seems too radical. The whole volume is a remarkable example of what I might define as Ibsenian preaching.

If someone says that Doctor Fosdick has also, in his day, done his share of Ibsenian preaching, I will admit there is much truth in this. Doctor Fosdick has, at various times, taken up the cudgels for ideas which were unpopular at the moment to his hearers. He fought valiantly for the freedom of biblical criticism against the literalists. He has preached a social gospel which caused some listeners to brand him as pink if not red. I have heard him defend Prohibition during Prohibition to a congregation by no means universally sympathetic. But his famous sermon on "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" was preached to a congregation which very largely agreed with him. And the overwhelming bulk of his homiletical work has been Shakespearean rather than Ibsenian. Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that both Doctor Fosdick and Doctor Niebuhr are chiefly interested in expounding the Christian tradition. They both believe that the minister's main task is to help people place themselves intelligently and consciously in the Christian stream of thought and life. Both are thoroughly steeped in the tradition they are eager to see carried on and enriched. As I understand the situation, however, Doctor Fosdick is convinced that many of the products of modern thought—especially in the realm of science—have a useful contribution to make to any full-orbed gospel for the modern world; Doctor Niebuhr is not so sure. Or, if Niebuhr, because of the breadth of his thought were willing to admit this up to a point in private conversation and at moments in his writing, he nevertheless stresses those places where even the best in modern thought has derailed the religious thinking of the modern man. Thus we find that what I have called the predominantly Shakespearean character of Doctor Fosdick's thought and method stems partly from his progressivism, whereas the predominantly Ibsenian character of Niebuhr's thought and method

stems partly from his traditionalism; or from his desire to see what he regards as the basic insights of biblical and traditional Christianity recovered and restated as a challenge to modern thought.

Let me set forth a *second* contrast between the techniques of Doctor Fosdick and Doctor Niebuhr as teaching preachers. In the early 1900's, Doctor Fosdick worked in a Bowery mission. Percy Hayward, who wrote a biographical sketch of him for a symposium, maintains that this experience helped to teach him the habit of expressing himself simply and clearly. Whether this be the case or no, one of the outstanding characteristics of Doctor Fosdick as both a teacher and a preacher is his crystal clarity. He can say all sayable things and express all expressible things more succinctly than almost any other preacher alive. His lectures on the "Modern Use of the Bible" are models of forthright, closely knit style. Take, for example, the second paragraph of this exceedingly influential book:

"To more ministers than one likes to think the use of the Bible is a difficult enigma. Some reveal this by avoiding wide areas of the Scripture altogether. All the king's horses and all the king's men could hardly drag them into dealing with certain passages that used to be the glory of our fathers' preaching. Others make their embarrassment clear by their use of texts—no longer treasures of truth from which they draw the substance of their message, but convenient pegs on which they hang a collection of their own thoughts. Others reveal their discomfort and confusion when they try to discuss biblical problems, such as miracles. They are ill at ease in handling these scriptural categories, reminding one of a comment which Longfellow once made on a preacher: 'I could not tell what he was driving at, except that he seemed desirous not to offend the congregation.' Still other preachers cut the Gordian knot by practically surrendering the Bible as the inspiration of their thought and teaching, save as by courtesy they use it in some oblique and cursory fashion to point a moral, or adorn a tale." No one has put that problem more clearly; the care taken to make the verbiage come out clean and apt is characteristic of Doctor Fosdick's entire written work.

Let us take a passage in which he is trying to explain a difficult point:

"Christ was human, and He must be divine in what sense He can be divine, being assuredly human. Many moderns do not know that throughout its early history the Church fought some of its most serious theological battles to maintain its hold on this humanness of Jesus. Suppose I should

say that Docetism was an early heresy that nearly tore the Church asunder and that it concerned who Jesus was. Would you not naturally suppose that the Docetists must have doubted His deity? Upon the contrary, they asserted that He was God but they did not believe that He was man. They said that He only seemed to be born with a body, to possess flesh and blood, to suffer and to die. And the Church fought the Docetists tooth and nail and drove them out. Were I to say that a heretic, Apollinaris, convulsed the Church with his idea of Jesus' nature, would you not suppose that he must have doubted His deity? Upon the contrary, he asserted that, but he denied that Jesus had a human soul and a human will, and the Church withheld him and cast him out. Throughout the early centuries some of the most serious battles in the Church were fought in the endeavor to keep a firm hold on the real humanity of Jesus." Doctor Fosdick goes on to ask what, then, the divinity of Jesus means and he answers: "In the first place, it is an assertion primarily not about Jesus, but about God." He then illustrates this point, follows it with the assertion, "In the second place, it is also an affirmation about Jesus." After setting this forth with exceedingly apt illustrations, he ends, "Finally, the divinity of Jesus is an affirmation not only about God and about Jesus, but about man." The whole sermon is a clear statement of what a clear-headed and reverent liberal may believe about Christ.

Now let us turn to Niebuhr's sermonic presentation of some of the same concepts:

"The idea of eternity entering time is intellectually absurd. This absurdity is proved to the hilt by all the theological dogmas which seek to make it rational. The dogmas which seek to describe the relation of God the Father (the God who does not enter history) and God the Son (the God of history) all insist that the Son is equal to the Father and yet not equal to Him. In the same way all doctrines of the two natures of Christ assert that He is not less divine for being human and temporal and not less human and temporal for being fully divine. Quite obviously it is impossible to assert that the eternal ground of existence has entered existence and not sacrificed its eternal and unconditioned quality, without outraging every canon of reason. Reason may deal with the conditional realities of existence in their relationships, and it may even point to the fathomless depth of creativity out of which existential forms are born. But it cannot assert that the Divine Creator has come into creation without

losing His unconditioned character. The truth that the Word was made flesh outrages all the canons by which truth is usually judged. Yet it is the truth. The whole character of the Christian religion is involved in that affirmation. It asserts that God's Word is relevant to human life. It declares that an event in history can be of such a character as to reveal the character of history itself." Later on, Niebuhr preaches:

"In Christian thought Christ is both the perfect man, 'the second Adam,' who had restored the perfection of what man was and ought to be; and the Son of God who transcends all the possibilities of human life. It is this idea which theology sought to rationalize in the doctrines of the two natures of Christ. It cannot be rationalized, yet it is a true idea. . . . There is no sharp line between the infinity in man and the infinity beyond man and yet there is a very sharp line. Man always remains a creature and his sin arises from the fact that he is not satisfied to remain so. He seeks to turn creatureliness into infinity; whereas his salvation depends upon subjecting his creaturely weakness to the infinite good of God. Christ, who expresses both the infinite possibilities of love in human life and the infinite possibilities beyond human life, is thus a true revelation of the total situation in which human life stands."

Niebuhr is sometimes misunderstood; but in passages like this it is not misunderstanding but understanding at all that is the problem of the average listener. When studied, Niebuhr's idea becomes clear. Heard, it does not convey a clear idea. But it is a characteristic of the man to make few concessions to the listener. And the approach has this to be said for it, that as the preacher is dealing with a complex and ultimately unstatable series of concepts, it is unwise to try to simplify, because such simplification easily becomes oversimplification. Doctor Fosdick has been accused of oversimplification; but there is at least this to be said, that he gives his listeners a clear concept of something sublime which, though in Niebuhr's terms may be a deception, nevertheless helps to shed as much light as the individual can receive upon the problems of theology.

In the realm of painting, we have a similar problem. Reality is complex. The artist must always select. The Dutch painters set forth their conception of life and character with simple clarity. The modern French painters used their pigmentation to suggest the almost infinite complexity of the scene they were trying to capture. The Dutch artists had neat, tidy, reasonable minds. The French painters were far too im-

pressed with the inexpressibility of their subjects to bring their paintings into sharp focus. Who can say that the one approach is better than the other? Alexander Pope expressed truths clearly by a rigid and meticulous process of careful exclusion so that his lines have the character of sculpture, and one can hardly imagine how they could be phrased in any other way:

Vice is a creature of such frightful mien  
As to be hated needs but to be seen,  
But, seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pardon, then embrace.

Clear, curt, complete! T. S. Eliot not so, in much of his writing. Most modern anthologies carry many stanzas which suggest far more than they express, or give one a sense of the rational insolubility of life's problems.

So some lecturers and preachers are not happy unless they can make the difficult more easy, and the obscure clear. Doctor McGiffert, of Union Seminary, had this capacity to a high degree. Other preachers and lecturers are so anxious that their hearers shall not think that a problem is settled when it is clearly analyzed and a reasonable formula for its solution suggested that they tend to leave their expression only slightly less confusing than reality itself. Both tendencies have their own peculiar dangers, as well as their obvious virtues.

I should like to venture this as a general comment on the subject: The test of all preaching and teaching is what happens to the listener or student as a result. Something or other must happen. Occasionally nothing does, because there has been no active response. A lecture or a sermon must be interesting—I hesitate to say entertaining, but at least interesting. After interest has been aroused and a line of thought presented, the point of the talk should be made clearly enough so that the hearer can tell someone else about it afterwards. More important, a sermon or lecture should live on in the memory, for a while at least, and challenge the one who heard to think about it from time to time.

Occasionally, however, a lecture or a sermon is given which sets in motion a discussion that lasts for a considerable period. The speaker may not have been as clear as one usually expects a speaker to be; he makes his hearers reach up, he puzzles them, he intrigues them, and he leaves it to others to help clarify some of the points raised.

When Professor Niebuhr spoke at the Lawrenceville School, there were two reports published in the school paper, one a news item and the

other a column headed, "The Man Who Came to Chapel." The column began: "To a large part of Lawrenceville, Professor Niebuhr's lecture at first seemed to be an amazing plunge into profundity which elicited much interest and less comprehension." It ended with the statement: "Regardless of what can be proved, the lecture gave us a hefty piece of something to chew on." The columnist, however, did get many of the important points of the lecture and said, in passing: "To the extent to which the speaker was hard to understand, however, he indirectly complimented his audience by refusing to elucidate every point (a process which some may have found almost too extensively used by the preceding speaker in the series)."

It is said that an embryonic composer once came to Mozart to ask him how to write a symphony. Mozart replied that he did not think it wise for a novice to start with a symphony, but rather with something less ambitious, possibly some ballet music. "But," the man protested, "you wrote a symphony yourself when you were thirteen." "Yes," responded Mozart, "but I did not have to ask anyone how to do it." There are many things in life which cannot be taught. I do not suppose that one can really teach another to preach. One can guide the development of a learner as a coach does; but one cannot even make a tennis player by teaching him merely the proper methods of hitting the ball. That is one of the great difficulties in a department of education, which is designed to teach teachers to teach.

One has to work out his own method, at the long last, so that what he does represents himself doing the best of which he is capable. But just as a composer may stimulate his creative faculties by acquaintance with the counterpoint of Bach and the orchestration of Brahms, so may preachers and teachers learn more about their work by studying the work of others. And of those whose work furnishes such a rewarding study, the men whom I have been discussing may, in my opinion, be listed very close to the top.

# Paramount and Absolute Obligations

HENRY NORRIS RUSSELL

MORE than thirty years ago, the writer vividly remembers hearing Josiah Royce lecture upon "The Philosophy of Loyalty," and discuss the precedence and the conflict of loyalties, illustrating his meaning by the classical and tragic case of General Lee after his State had seceded. Faced as we are once more with the times that try men's souls, there is no problem more imperative today, and few more perplexing.

No one doubts the existence of a hierarchy of obligations, one level above another. In the miniature world of athletics, for instance, the success of one's team is clearly a higher aim than personal fame for brilliant but risky play, and still more clearly subordinate to the canons of honorable sportsmanship. Following up any such ladder of values, in play or in earnest, we come to its highest rung. In each field of thought or action, there is a paramount value or obligation, clearly above its neighbors. How may we find the relative heights to which our ladders reach, and compare the paramount values of each by some trustworthy standard? It is not alone in great affairs and mature life that the question becomes vital. The problem of the honor system—when does loyalty to a comrade become treason to the morale of the school—runs into the early years.

Much of the confusion which imperils us arises from the unthinking assumption that an obligation which is paramount in a given field—and with reason—is therefore absolute under all other circumstances.

Take the principle of the sacredness of human life. This is paramount in medical practice, and is older than Christianity. The Hippocratic oath is one of the most ancient formulae which still has binding moral force. The physician must consider how he may preserve his patient's life or limb without questioning overmuch, if at all, what value the restored life or strength may have to society. His duty is to save.

A little analysis indicates that the main sanction behind this principle, as good men and true hold it today, comes not from religious or humanitarian motives (which of course reinforce it), but from cold reason. The physician possesses more than other men's knowledge, but only one man's wisdom. His training gives him terrible power. The issues of

life and death are in his hands. And the unrestricted exercise of such a power may not safely be left to even the best man's personal judgment. What this power is was brought home to the writer by a little tale told by an authority on synthetic drugs, lecturing to a college chemical club. A new compound had been thoroughly tested upon animals and proved promising enough to justify the final venture of controlled experimental use in a hospital. Only when a sufficient number of patients, with the same types of pneumonia, had been treated, half with the new drug and half by the previous methods, could it be determined whether the new treatment was safe and sure enough to be released for general practice. Toward the end of the study, it grew clear that the new drug greatly increased the chance of recovery; yet the young doctor in charge had to fill up the number required for a decisive test, assigning the new and old treatments to successive admissions. Telling of it afterwards, he said, "I felt like God."

The risk of recommending a defective treatment on the basis of inadequate evidence justified this particular action. But the Hippocratic principle stands. For the sake of the physician and his patients alike, he and all his colleagues must solemnly covenant not to use their powers to destroy life. There are tragic cases of hopeless suffering—those who have read it will remember Edith Wharton's *The Fruit of the Tree*—but hard cases make bad law. This is of course no argument at all against the use of all the resources of science for alleviating suffering; nevertheless the sacredness of human life rightly remains a paramount and supreme principle of medical practice. But this does not compel belief in a universal and inherent sacredness of life. Human limitations supply an adequate sanction. The highest scientific knowledge, the most advanced technique, do not give us, in face of our fellow men, the right to play God—"to kill and to make alive" on our own responsibility.

Yet, if this very principle is assumed to be of absolute and unlimited obligation it follows that organized human society has no moral right to defend itself by force against large-scale, unprovoked and predatory violence, whether from within or without. To affirm this is tantamount to maintaining that the sacredness of all individual human lives takes precedence of the maintenance of social organization on a higher level than the predatory. As the predators obviously do not hold life sacred, this ends in a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The sacredness of life is thus to be adjudged a paramount principle in ordinary personal relations, because no man has the right to play God, but not an absolute principle governing all social relations, because too many men can—and do—play the devil. The society which defends itself has no claim, either, to set up as God; but that is no reason why it should give place to the devil.

Problems of this sort arise everywhere. Truth claims our highest allegiance; but is the sufferer from a dangerous illness entitled to be told a truth which, by shock alone, may cost him his life? The answer here is simple. But it is not so easy to determine whether a physician should always inform his patient of the nature of his illness, or tell him that recovery is no longer within the bounds of reasonable prognosis. Many things have weight in such a decision: the patient's temperament and character, the psychological as well as the physical effects of the disease, the existence of obligations which ought to be met before disablement, and so on. And to attempt to set up a general exceptionless rule would only darken counsel.

The list of such situations could be extended indefinitely till one asks in weariness, if not in despair, if there are any absolute obligations which invariably transcend all other factors in every situation in which they appear? Such are not far to seek. The man trained in science will think first of the obligation of intellectual honesty; of seeking all accessible truth, and deliberately refusing to ignore any part of it. The humanitarian will stress the obligation of impartial good will—of dealing with everyone with understanding and without enmity.<sup>1</sup> The theologian may quote, "The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to His revealed will." All three have good cases—and all three must beware lest their words be "twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools"—witness the debunker, the sentimentalist and the fanatic.

There are more subtle dangers which beset us when, in all sincerity, we try to put the great principles into practice.

No obligation is more plainly enjoined in the Gospels than that of forgiveness. It is enshrined in the Lord's Prayer, and enforced with tremendous emphasis in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, "So like-

<sup>1</sup>I deliberately refrain from using the word "love" because there is hardly any other word in English which has so many, so diverse and so confusingly intergrading meanings. It has one semantic rival—as a biological friend of mine maintains—and that is "spirit." Compare the three adjectives—spiritual, spirited and spirituous!

wise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

In our own land, and almost within living memory, this spirit was expressed by Abraham Lincoln at the time of his Second Inaugural. It is too great and too closely knit in its reasoning to quote in fragments. Better that we read it and ponder, till we too can say, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in"—whatever this may be.

This compelling obligation is to forgive *trespasses*—offenses committed against ourselves—and, to the degree that we are personally involved, against our families or our country. But to forgive *sins*—offenses against our fellow men which do not touch us directly, or against God, the denial of the very principles of righteousness and good will—is not in our power. "Who can forgive sins save God alone," said the Pharisees: and Jesus, even while He claimed power upon earth to forgive sins, accepted their premise. We may pray God to forgive sinners, and shall do well if we include the petition "that it may please Thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and to turn their hearts."

But to take upon ourselves to forgive sins is presumptuous. It is to usurp God's place. Even the victim can forgive only the trespass. Like dying Stephen, he must pray God to forgive the sins. The Book of Common Prayer declares that God "hath given power and commandment unto His ministers to declare and pronounce unto His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." But the most thorough-going interpretation of this high office insists that the priest possesses no authority of his own, and no prerogative of pronouncing forgiveness otherwise than in accordance with principles laid down in advance by divine revelation.

The obligation to strive for the reclamation of the sinner is quite another matter, supported by the authority of the gospel, the dictates of humanity, and likewise by the homely political maxim that every convert "counts two on a division." But forgiveness of impenitent oppressors has certainly no claim, in religion, morals, or common sense, because they do not happen to have oppressed *us*.

But is not all this a very disquieting doctrine? If, in so great a part of practical life, we are to be guided by paramount obligations, compelling in a certain field, but yielding to others in different regions, what becomes

of any absolute standards at all? Here is one of the increasing number of instances in which illumination upon moral and religious problems is thrown from an unexpected angle. The light comes this time from far up what many would call the sterile crags of physics.

We physicists can ascribe no moral significance to the phenomena which we observe. They are neither right nor wrong, they are simply so. But we have been able to get some distance below the surface of things and to devise interpretations which are successively more and more general in their range. As this goes on, we have found repeatedly, till we are no longer surprised when it happens again, that the rules or "laws" which apply in a certain field of study turn out to be greatly simplified consequences of more widely applicable rules, which are usually much more complicated, harder to understand, and very much harder to explain to those without technical training.

A relatively simple example serves best. The schoolboy studying physics and the engineer designing a new steam engine both think of the steam in the cylinder as a gas, which fills uniformly its whole volume and exerts a uniform pressure upon every portion of its surface. The laws which connect this pressure with the temperature and density of the steam have been accurately determined by experiment, as have other laws of gases and of heat. As a result, we have a scheme of properties and laws which not only enables the schoolboy to solve his problems, but permits the engineer to predict reliably the operation and efficiency of new types of engine. Yet the same schoolboy, a year or so later, has to learn that none of these simple and beautiful pictures corresponds to reality. The steam is not a continuous fluid, but an assemblage of a prodigious number of individual molecules, separated by empty space, flying about and colliding with one another at a rate which dizzies even the trained imagination, if not viewed through a protective screen of notation in powers of ten. The pressure arises from collisions of the molecules with the walls, and is not uniform either in space or in time. But we can observe only the combined effect of millions of billions of these impacts, and their net result averages out to be the same, every time, for the smallest practicable test area of surface, far within the possible accuracy of measurement. Hence the simplified picture of the continuous fluid and the uniform pressure is practically perfectly satisfactory. The schoolboy uses it, the engineer uses it, the professional physicist uses it, and they all put their trust in it. But

the physicist knows that, beyond a certain limit—roughly when there are less than a millionth part as many molecules in the same space as in ordinary air or steam—the averaging-out will be less and less complete. Under these conditions he works with the far more complicated picture of the swarm of molecules. In turn he devises machines like the vacuum pumps used in getting the gas out of radio tubes, which work efficiently, but would not work at all if the gas were really a continuous fluid.

The moral of this longish digression is this. Neither the physicist nor any other man of science cares whether the laws with which he is calculating are ultimate or not. What he wants to know is whether they may be trusted to give reliable results within the region in which he is working, and to how great a degree of accuracy he would have to go before he would be obliged to take into account the next more complicated interpretation of things—and he gets along very well indeed.

The difference between paramount and absolute obligations is evidently very much smaller than that between the continuous and the molecular concepts of matter. They are really upon the same level (so to speak). For example, it is a commonplace that the principle of the sacredness of life, with all the rest of the latter half of the Ten Commandments, may be reasonably deduced from the single principle "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; especially if this is interpreted in the light of the story elicited by the nameless listener who, willing to justify himself, said, "And who is my neighbor?" In view of the complexity of human relations, it is too much to expect that any one consequence of the greater principle should remain its most important expression through so wide a field. There will be a subordinate field in which it is a safe guide. Then gradually, not abruptly, we will pass into a region where some other deduction from the universal rule is paramount. To find these boundaries takes clear thinking, and often hard thinking, but this is no reason that it should not be attempted, and succeed.

In these days when we tread the darker regions of life, we need all our powers of reason. By their honest use, remembering the Whitsunday prayer for "a right judgment in all things," we may escape both the loss of faith that might come from puzzling over the failure of the principles paramount in the past to be so in the present, and the loss of ourselves and our all that might follow their unthinking application in this distracted world.

## Preaching and Prophesying

J. R. P. SCLATER

**S**HORTLY after the close of the last war, a prominent labor leader in Great Britain remarked to me that the only complaint he had against the Church was that its pulpit did not "set the heather on fire." "If we," he added, "had one day in seven set aside for propaganda, with buildings in every parish in the country secured to us, we would start a blaze."

The wistful feeling of disappointment, which my friend expressed, has been felt by the pulpit itself. So many sermons and such apparently little effect! Consequently, preachers have increasingly turned to immediate and practical subjects, urged by the hope of seeing more visible results of their efforts. The gospel, as understood by our fathers, has often taken a second place to problems of the "new order," and biblical expositions have been confined to applications of texts to the most pressing of local economic disputes. I once heard a Bible reading on I Corinthians 12—the chapter on the unity of the body—turned, after a perfunctory sentence or two on the general teaching of the passage, into a discussion on the milk supply of Chicago. A glance at the titles of sermons in the press shows how widespread this tendency is—a tendency which would justify the exclamation of Mr. Asquith, the former British Prime Minister, after hearing a famous London preacher, "very interesting, but not enough gospel to save a titmouse."

This pulpit attitude naturally has been increased by the war. Our minds and hearts are so dominated by the appalling experiences of the world, that we can think and talk of nothing else. We feel, and rightly feel, that the preacher, in common with everybody else, must contribute what he can to the strengthening of the spirit of freemen. Mr. Churchill himself made direct appeal to us, when he spoke in Ottawa, to be a definite inspiring influence in the struggle. He specified "the preacher in his pulpit" as one on whom particular responsibility was laid; and we, on our part, agree that our duty clearly is to enable our people to see our present experiences in the light of the Eternal, believing that, the better we can achieve such vision, the more manfully we shall arm us for the fight. But the inevitable result is that the direct evangelical appeal to the individual

is lessened, giving place to disquisitions on the Nazi ideology, on schemes for social amelioration amongst ourselves, or on the explanation of Russian valor.

Nor will the tendency be lessened with the end of the war. On the contrary, it will increase. We are entering on a period of upheaval and experiment unequaled since the Reformation; and the Church will go as near as it can to committing suicide, if it has not a contribution, and that a large one, to make to the rebuilding of a shattered world. For 2,000 years, Christ, with many a setback, has been slowly extending the territory where His writ runs; and now we have an opportunity, such as seldom comes to men, to annex further areas in the relations of mankind to His beneficent Kingdom. It is unthinkable that the Christian Church should not, in all ways proper to its own nature, lay hold on that opportunity.

As we face that enterprise, we can be encouraged by the fact that His victories in past days have been neither few nor slight. In Christian countries the administration of law takes a Christian view of the equal rights of litigants; the responsibility of the strong for the weak is recognized by the existence of hospitals as well as in our educational systems; the family and its sanctity is acknowledged to be the unit of primary importance to the State; no candidate for public office amongst us would have the faintest chance of election if his program consisted of a repudiation of Christ. Indeed, when three governments appeared with a program of this character, we leaped to arms against them. In the sphere of personal behavior, Christ's mastery over public opinion is complete amongst us. We have moved far from the position that "it is intolerable when religion invades the sphere of private habit," to quote from one of Queen Victoria's early Prime Ministers. On the contrary, we expect the individual to behave himself as a Christian human being, or pay the penalty of the disrespect of his community.

Thus, those who maintain that Christianity has failed are merely blind to patent facts. But, if they mean that its victory is far from complete, they are painfully right. The spheres of industrial and international relations still await His control; and now the trumpet sounds for advance in these regions. We need not be surprised that some of the best and most ardent spirits amongst us plead with us to be concerned, in the pulpit and out of it, with that opportunity, and like the antislavery leader, to "forget that we have souls," or, at least, prove that we have them by bending to

the one task of endeavoring to get the Father's will done on earth in the peace treaties and in what will follow them.

In such circumstances, the pulpit must consider its position and its function. So must the pew, for there is much to be said for the aphorism "like people, like priest." Any minister is exposed to the influence of his elders and managers, or whatever be the title we give to our leading laymen; and they, in their turn, are children of wrath even as others, especially when any question of economic change is before them. Let us, therefore, offer one or two reflections, relevant to these matters.

First, it must never be forgotten that the first function of the Church is to worship God, and to provide occasions on which the whole community, if it will, can engage together on that supreme enterprise and duty. The sermon, moreover, is part of that enterprise, and both in matter and form must be harmonious thereto. A good many of our problems would be solved, and mistakes avoided, if we remembered that fundamental fact.

Second, we must be content to acknowledge that we are men under authority, for our teaching as for everything else. Our business is to declare the mind of Christ, as given in the record of His words and life, and in all that led up to them and has flowed from them in the later writings and universal declarations of the Church. In the proper sense of the term, we must be biblical teachers. It is not for us to say, "I say unto you," but rather, "He says and *therefore I say*."

It is at this point that we come up against the claim that the only worthy use of the pulpit is for what has been termed "prophetic preaching." I have never been able quite to understand this phrase, except that it means that preaching should be ethical, and particularly directed against wrongs done by man in the mass, whether that mass be a city or a nation, an interest or a system.

Now, nobody denies that the pulpit should concern itself with public wrong; but the conception of the preacher as primarily a prophet seems to contain dangers. Let us have prophetic utterance, by all means; *but*, first catch your prophet. The supply of Isaiahs and Jeremiahs that God affords to the world is strictly limited. The Creator conserves His gift of genius. At any rate, whatever else a prophet is, he is primarily a listener, with so sensitive a spiritual hearing apparatus, that he can catch the whispers of the still small voice. To be frank, a good deal of the utterance of our modern prophets does not suggest that equipment. Rather, it suggests

the temperament of men of like passions with ourselves, who feel boldest when they are most denunciatory and find difficulty in distinguishing between their principles and their prejudices. It would be better and wiser to put ourselves at the disposal of the Supreme Sensitive, and to confine our demands upon man's attention to the regions in which we can speak "in His Name."

Further, "prophetic preaching" seems to be impatient with doctrinal teaching, which is described as "abstract" and "out of touch with reality." As if the things of the material world were "real," and the relations of God and the soul were fantasies! Was there ever such a topsy-turvy conception? Because of our lack of insistence on doctrine, a famous philosopher declared not long ago that our pulpit had lost its power. "It is," he said, "no longer concerned with the real, and it will not recover its influence until it returns to a search for Truth which is eternal." We are in danger of becoming like men who are all agog to build a bridge, but decline to be troubled with the mathematical and physical principles on which alone bridges can stand. Doctrine gives the principles of relation, whereby we learn what the true "end" is, to which the practical efforts of practical men are to be directed; and ignorance of them will send us jerry-building a caricature of the City of God.

Wherefore, let us be rather ambassadors than self-nominated prophets, announcing first the principles which our Authority declares to be true, and then seeking means for their application. This involves a fresh and intensive study of the teaching of Christ, in its entirety. We have tended to be less than candid about the whole range of our catholic faith. Our own prejudices have tempted us to take snippets from the Lord's words, together with a gentle passage or two from other scriptural writings, and make them into an authority within the authority. Not long ago a correspondent wrote that "the Sermon on the Mount and I Corinthians 13 contain the whole of the gospel," excluding apparently the stern parables and the darkness of the Cross. A fine example of "wishful thinking." No, we must face the whole of it, and not be blind to its austerity as well as to its grace. Indeed, it is only when we face its austerity that the astonishment of its graciousness becomes manifest. "I, the Terrible One, am for thee," cried Jeremiah. There the prophet speaks and gives us hope that is hope indeed.

Once we are fairly founded on the "verities," we have not only a

freedom, but a duty, to deal with ethical and mundane affairs. Our range is magnificently wide. For instance, Christ's teaching gives us a right to declare what we may call "priorities." A good example is much to the fore just now, when we say that law must defend personality before it defends property. Since the days of Cyrus, civilized man has claimed the right to hold his own, lawfully obtained; and nobody in his senses is going wantonly to overthrow that wisdom of the ages. But we are learning that that right may conflict with the right of another man to call his soul his own; and we are coming to the opinion that where that clash is clear and definite, adjustments must be made in favor of the soul. In short, it is the duty of the pulpit, acting as the conscience of the community to point out (using Kagawa's pregnant phrase) "the unbearable thing," and to make it unbearable in the eyes of our fellow citizens. To many of us one "unbearable thing" in our way of life in recent times is plain enough. It is a look which came into women's eyes, in countless decent, honest homes, on Friday nights about six o'clock, when the bread-winner came home. As he entered the door, his wife turned with the unspoken dread alive in her face. No word was necessary; her eyes put the question, "Are you fired?" We are not moving outside Christ's authority when we say that we cannot stand that look any longer; that whatever else goes, it must go; and that, consequently, any reasonable scheme of social security from that fear, has our support. At the same time we must be careful not to be tied to the tail of any political party, for if we are, our capacity to be an honest conscience for the community will be atrophied. Party allegiance is built on compromise; but "no compromise" is the slogan of conscience.

Finally, we come back to the point from which we started. All these duties do not deliver us from the duty of being simple, evangelic preachers, "aching for the souls of men." "Please, God, reform the world, beginning with me," must be our prayer for ourselves and for our people. If one thing is certain, it is that the world will not be reformed for long by unreformed reformers. Uneradicated evil and selfishness in the human heart will drive a coach and horses through the best economic and legal arrangements we can devise. Wherefore the quiet work of men, whose one desire is that the Love that has won their own hearts may win the hearts of those who hear them, is the first and most effective of the means committed to us of extending, in this sad world, the Kingdom of God's desire.

# Changing Emphases in American Theology

W. NORMAN PITTEKER

**I** REMEMBER sitting one evening with Dr. Paul Elmer More, in his study at Princeton, while that great master talked of matters literary and theological. He said many things on that occasion, one of them the rather surprising, "You know, I am always frightened when I hear that the Bishops of the Anglican Church are meeting: I tremble for the Catholic faith!" But the remark which I have particularly in mind at this moment is somewhat different. Mr. More was discussing current American Protestant theology, and he told me of a creed which a friend of his had brought back from a recent meeting. It ran: "We believe in the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the leadership of Jesus, salvation by character, and the progress of the human race upward and onward forever." To this "extraordinary statement," Mr. More said, he had only one phrase which he thought should be added, "And I believe in the neighborhood of Boston."

That creed, with the exception of Mr. More's naughty addition, represents, it is fair to say, the theological atmosphere in America with which we were all quite familiar, ten to fifteen years ago. It had a reputable history. To a large degree it rose out of the work of the great German theologian, Harnack, whose book, *What Is Christianity?* was very influential in our own country during the first two decades of this century. It made a strong appeal to that predominantly ethical strain in American religious thought, which Puritanism (although it had lost its severe Calvinistic drive during the nineteenth century) contributed to our national life. It had certain affinities with the new movement in biblical criticism, a movement which sought to return to what was usually called "the simple gospel of Jesus" in order to picture Him as a man among men, and to see what had been His own religion before (as such thinkers felt) the perverting work of Saint Paul and the corrupting influence of Hellenistic religion had done their job in sullying with theology and sacramentalism the original purity of the Galilean gospel. Above all, I think, this creed appealed to the American *activismus*, as the Germans call it, which wants to be "up and

about," to get something done, to engage in "pioneer work" and to let no grass grow under one's feet—the sort of notion parodied by Father George Tyrrell in his comment that "for some people Christianity means going about doing good, particularly the kind of doing good which involves a great deal of going about." And so, for a quarter century or longer, the gospel of what is now called "liberalism" had its day; a great day it was for those who shared its convictions or prejudices, although not so great a day for historical Christianity.

Perhaps it may be useful to recall to our minds some of the things that we were likely to be reading and thinking about, during the period which a friend of mine has called "the halcyon days before 1929." Certainly we all knew, and were compelled to esteem, the preaching of men like Harry Emerson Fosdick, who in those days carried the banner for the liberals. We were thinking about, and trying to find a way to reconcile, what were usually denominated as "the religion of Jesus" and "the religion about Jesus." No matter where we stood, theologically, we were being made conscious that there was a difference, if not a conflict, between the two. The work of New Testament critics, while it was not intended to prove any particular thesis, tended to stress the teaching of Jesus as recoverable from the records in such a way that we could not help seeing that the actual gospel which Jesus preached was not exactly that which the early Church had proclaimed. Form criticism had not come along, to enable us to see that such distinctions are in reality rather artificial, and that the only knowledge we have of the historic figure and his teaching is through the Christ of faith and his total impact upon the lives of men.

Then there was the constant stream of books on social problems, in their relation to Christian thought and action. Harry Ward was flourishing. We were reading the books of Sherwood Eddy and Kirby Page. We sang lustily about our rising up to build on earth the Kingdom of God—a conception which is quite alien to the New Testament, in which the Kingdom of God comes down from heaven to earth, and is not built by human hands at all. Sometimes, even, we were assured that the ethical struggle, whether in personal or social forms, was more important than belief in God—"a man's life is what matters"—and nontheistic humanism, or vaguely theistic humanism, was in the air. It is not entirely unfair to say, perhaps, that its teaching was often either tacitly accepted, or necessarily attacked with weapons which were drawn from its own armory.

While some theologians were too deeply grounded in a credal, sacramental, traditional theology and worship to be swept entirely from their moorings, all were influenced, and influenced profoundly, by the popular thought of the day. We met such an attitude everywhere, and we were bound to think, at least part of the time, in its terms, even if we did not accept its conclusions. The emphasis was necessarily laid on God as Father, with a tendency to stress the indulgent and kindly side of Fatherhood; on Jesus as Master of men, who had taught us that God is love, men are brothers, and understanding and sympathy the great rules of religion; sometimes on the incarnation in the rather attenuated sense of "our divinest symbol," the representation in a man of those moral values to which we dedicated ourselves in following His example and teaching; on the essential goodness of man and the perfectibility of His character, so that it was possible to work with hope of proximate success for the bringing in of God's kingdom here and now. . . . Here was the popular scheme.

It is against this sort of background that we can best understand the change in viewpoint of our American theologians, such as Niebuhr, Bennett, Horton and many another. Brought up upon such a liberal theology, nourished by a profound ethical faith, concerned for the social implications of Christianity, they became, during the twenties, dissatisfied with, but not fundamentally in antagonism to, the prevalent mood. They saw that the "perfectionist" Christianity of the day was hardly adequate for their own faith, much less the world situation; but they still thought in terms of the liberal Christianity they had learned, and they wrote of the faith in language hardly different from the ordinary run of the liberal mill.

But about the middle twenties they had a change of mind and heart. The reasons for this were many: we may suggest their own parochial experience, a deepening insight into the complicated social structure which participation in social work and labor movements had given, a clearer understanding of the New Testament world, and the influence of the newer German theologians. It seems to have been later that many of these American writers really came to grips with the actual material of the Reformation theologians and the other great masters of Christian thought, as traditionally understood.

The newer German theologians were particularly important. Some of them are well-known to us all by now: Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, particularly. What was distinctive of these men, and other continental

writers of the newer schools, was a complete and utter revulsion from all that had been popular theology in Germany and elsewhere during the pre-war period. Against the God who is the indulgent and benign heavenly Father, they set the transcendent God who is wholly Other, hiding Himself from men; against the Jesus of history, with His simple ethic of love, they set the mysterious Invader of history, whose humanity is the incognito for His divinity which can be known only by faith; against the conception of human nature as good and perfectible, they set the conviction that man is sinful, and left to himself is without hope, lost and leading his fellows into a hell of despair and frustration; against the Kingdom of God to be built upon this earth, they set an otherworldly kingdom, utterly apart from any earthly embodiment. There was no way from man to God, and only in His strange mercy did God make a way to man, which by faith, and as a deep secret, was known to the believer who was thus saved out of the world. All of this, surely, was very different from the American liberalism which we have sketched above.

Reinhold Niebuhr illustrates admirably the change we have described. And it was when first he came to such a position that he began his critical work, which has now brought liberal Protestantism to ruins. That is put strongly, but it is supported by the evidence. From *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, through his *Beyond Tragedy*, to the Gifford Lectures, *Human Nature and Destiny*, Niebuhr has given a complete and thoroughgoing analysis and criticism of the popular American theology; he has maintained the insight, if not always the conclusions, of traditional Christianity into human nature, its relation to God, and its radical difficulties; he has pointed the way toward a more constructive position, although he has not yet done much to further the building. Niebuhr has made a contribution of extraordinary value, by reason of his clear and undeviating investigation of the facts about man, society and God.

For his school, man is a creature caught in a terrible dilemma. He knows that he was made for love, that he was made for mutual living, and he sees this ethic as the truth about his nature. On the other hand, both by reason of his inextricable social involvement in claims and counterclaims (which inevitably follow from life in groups), and by reason of his inveterate self-assertion, self-pride and lust for power (all of which is what orthodox thought saw clearly in its doctrine of original sin), man is utterly unable to live as he should. He cannot avoid making a god of himself;

his effort at transcendence is an assertion of his desire for power; and his life, in the word found in *Acts*, is *skolios*, going round in circles and getting nowhere at all; he is frustrated and helpless, not merely by defect of knowledge of *how to be better*, but by defect of will really to *want to be better*. This, in the words of Pascal, is the misery and grandeur of man; he is godlike and bestial, or (as we might put it) he is made for love, he lives for lust.

How, then, is man to be delivered from the body of this death? It is difficult to avoid the feeling that in answering this question Niebuhr has never completely emancipated himself from liberalism. Although he speaks often enough of God's action to save man, it always seems (at least to some of us) that it is God's action in *revealing* to man, showing to man, telling man, that as a sinner he is yet justified, made safe, given purpose and direction, by the fact that God loves him while he is yet *in* his sin. This is, of course, in the Protestant tradition of imputed righteousness; but it is also in the liberal tradition of man's being shown or told the truth about himself and about God, with the tacit assumption that such is all he can expect, perhaps all that he requires. Some very recent remarks of Niebuhr would indicate that he recognizes that such a view is not adequate. A strengthening of incarnation doctrine would seem to show that before long he may learn something more about the radical nature of God's act, with the reconstitution of human nature in Christ and the donation of grace as infused, and as power, rather than as declaratory of God's favor alone. If this should find a place in his thought, Niebuhr would then be obliged to find some more satisfactory place for the Church as the living organism which is the continued act of God, and for the sacramental participation by which man is united to God as a member of the sacred humanity of the Incarnate One. Furthermore, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit would come into its own, and would in itself modify the conception of God which is maintained by Niebuhr.

We can be grateful that many of the neo-orthodox school have stressed once more, and with such vigor, that it is only by act of God that man can be given true life, and that the futility of existence is redeemed not by our effort but by God's free gift. But what sort of God? Here they include both the rational and the volitional aspects; but they tend, it seems, to consider God chiefly as explanation, or as final meaning, of things—in this following the thought of Dr. Paul Tillich, whose writings

are molding the younger generation of Protestant ministers more than any other man, save perhaps Niebuhr himself. Once again, we may feel that there are traces of the older liberalism here. God is meaning, explanation . . . yet He is transcendent meaning, mysteriously remote explanation, to be known truly (and then only partially) by those who are justified by faith and share in the Christian understanding of life. This conception of God is deeper and more satisfactory than the superficial deity of the early decades of our century, although it lacks some of the richness of the Augustinian and medieval theology. Happily our American writers seem never to fall into the strange Christocentric fallacy of the liberal Protestants and of the Barthian theologians.

There is no time to follow the many fascinating avenues of thought which open up before us. Instead, we should wish to emphasize the importance of the change in emphasis which has been given American theology, and to suggest that the clergy ought to make themselves thoroughly familiar with this newer thinking, since it is bound to play a large part in American theology during the next few decades, and on the whole a very healthy part. The older liberalism still lingers on among the men of thirty-five or forty, and over; but among the younger Protestants it is noticeable chiefly by its absence, and among the distinguished theologians of the day, there is an entirely new orientation.

Over against this "neo-orthodoxy," as the school of the followers of Tillich and Niebuhr is often called, is another strain in contemporary American theology. This is the new emphasis found in several quarters upon the Church as the "carrier of salvation." When Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison, editor of *The Christian Century*, first used the phrase in his Yale lectures on *What Is Christianity?* he was roundly attacked by the neo-orthodox, and given none too sympathetic a hearing in the rest of the Protestant theological world. The old-fashioned liberals disliked his ideas, because they felt that personal religion was more important than the ecclesiastical institution—although (as Dr. W. H. Dunphy has suggested in discussion with this writer) often liberalism can substitute the Church for God and thus find some object of religious devotion short of deity or of the incarnate God. *Perhaps* this is part of Doctor Morrison's own pattern, but one may venture to question the suggestion in his particular case. One is not concerned to defend all that Doctor Morrison has written; but we at least must support his brave insistence that the revelation of God

made in Jesus, and the persisting life in God which that act made possible, are conveyed to us only through the Church which itself came into being through the act. Doctor Morrison needs considerable heightening and strengthening of his incarnation doctrine; but it is important that from the heart of liberalism there should come a new recognition of the Church, and an understanding that Christian theology, Christian worship and Christian ethics have their reference to the community of the faithful. The Church is not incidental nor accidental to the Christian gospel; it is essential to it—and the debacle of Protestantism because of its intensive individualism, as well as the unhistorical or gnostic nature of its faith because it has left the community's grounding-work, are interestingly and convincingly presented by Doctor Morrison.

Mention may be made at this place, also, of the school of empirical theologians, including Doctor Macintosh and Doctor Wieman, and their much more penetrating fellow thinker, Dr. Edwin Ewart Aubrey. These men would begin with a minimum conception of God, to be defined tentatively as the sum total of the value-producing factors in the universe, working toward the development of personality; but they would go beyond this to the God whose more profound nature is hinted in those values themselves and in human ideals and hopes. Doctor Aubrey goes much farther than this, and is posing all the right questions about man in his *Man's Search for Himself*; probably he will find his way into something more definite than the tentative schemes of Charles Hartshorne in *Man's Vision of God* and other liberals who are moving out of the old position by a route different from that of the "neo-orthodox."

The new concern with worship, and its place in the Church, which is to be found among American Protestants (a score or more of books could be cited at this point), has its own interest; but we may with more profit turn to the liturgical movement in the Roman Catholic Church, which is influencing the Episcopal Church very extensively. Originally concerned with bringing the Liturgy more fully and consciously into the life of the people (and for that reason called by some Romans "the Anglican Movement in the Roman Church"), it is now having a much more general effect. One can hardly pick up a book of contemporary Roman theology without seeing that the notion of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, the organic fellowship of the faithful, has been restored to a gratifying degree. The ordinary Roman writer no longer speaks of the Church in that sheerly

organizational, almost mechanical way, which was so general. A popular book which illustrates this fact is Father Ellard's splendid *Christian Life and Worship*, in which the whole range of Christian faith and practice is presented as springing out of, and having reference to, the liturgical act of the Church in which Christ is both offered to God and received by the faithful. Karl Adam and Romano Guardini in Germany; Maritain, Mersch and Lubac in France; and Watkin in England, have contributed to this movement; and in America the Roman Church has actively sponsored the movement, despite some obscurantist opposition, so that new life is moving through that communion, and indirectly giving an impetus to the worship of the Anglican Church, as well as the Protestant communions.

The name of Maritain recalls to us another new tendency of the day, found chiefly in the Roman Church, but having its influence elsewhere, as illustrated by the attention given it by Doctor Aubrey in a recent survey of modern theology. This is the rethinking and restating of scholastic philosophy, with its theological consequences, in the idiom of our own day. Maritain himself is not content to say over again what the angelic doctor, and his commentators (like Suarez), have said; he insists on a new presentation of the *philosophia perennis*, which shall take account of modern science, and especially attend to the critical work of the post-Cartesian philosophers whose chief fault has been that they have lost that sense of organic unity which marked the medieval synthesis. This neo-scholasticism has an intellectual respectability which makes it impossible for philosophers to sneer; and it is noteworthy that at philosophical conferences, and in theological discussions, the names of St. Thomas and his followers are once again heard with honor.

Perhaps, in conclusion, it may not be impertinent to suggest some points which we need in these days and against the changing theological scene to stress in preaching and teaching. The first is the reality of God. That should go without saying; yet it does need to be said. God is God, and all else is secondary to Him and to His will. Religion, even, is secondary to Him; church, creeds, all else whatever it may be, have meaning only in bringing God and His truth, God and His life, into the midst of our human experience as the inexhaustibly rich, supremely sufficient Reality of all realities.

Secondly, we need to stress the exceeding sinfulness of man. Too often the liturgy of a church (such as the Anglican) is nobly "Augustinian,"

but its pulpit and teaching are "Pelagian," as Niebuhr has charged. An accurate portrait of man as frustrated, impotent to do good, lost in his own bewilderment, without goal and without direction, self-seeking and self-centered even when he thinks himself to be holiest and most altruistic: here is an emphasis which we dare not overlook.

Thirdly, we need to dwell on the divine condescension in God's taking our nature upon Him, in bringing to pass in this world His mighty act, whereby men have been taken into union with Him, their history and their world given meaning; and on the fellowship of the Church, where a new citizenship and loyalty is found for men in the order of charity which is the Kingdom of God. Life is thus made safe at its center; we are secure through the changes and chances of life because our hearts are with God who is our peace, and in His sacramental fellowship and by participation in His sacramental sacrifice we are empowered to live in Him, in whose hand is our destiny. This will not make men quietists, but it will make their right activity purposeful and humble.

The changing emphases of the American theological scene give a remarkable apologetic opportunity. In this day, with a war upon us, with great confusion and bewilderment about us, and with theological gropings around us, the gospel of the Holy Catholic Church can give men the sanity and the hope which will issue in a charity that is not of this world, but which can make of this world something more like a fit courtyard of the heavenly habitation which God has prepared for those whom the Pioneer of our salvation did not refuse to call His friends.

## A Poet for Pastors

SAMUEL G. BEERS

**A** SECONDHAND bookstore may be a mine of wealth, with hidden treasure on any shelf. One such discovery came to me in a St. Paul shop nine years ago where I chanced to buy a copy of Edwin Arlington Robinson's *Collected Poems*. When I read them I experienced a thrill and a satisfaction, partly from the clean-cut character of the poetry, and partly from the thrill of discovery. I had never heard of Robinson; no one introduced me to him; he was my own personal "strike." This sudden introduction must have been duplicated by other persons, for when the Literary Guild picked his "Tristram" as one of its monthly selections in 1927, Robinson burst on the reading public as a virtual unknown.

Yet here was a man who had been publishing poetry since 1896, and in that time had "cleared the ground" for the renaissance of poetry in modern times. He accomplished this by rebelling against the vapid fluff which was the literary style in the post-Victorian period, described by Van Wyck Brooks as one in which:

"Romanticism had given birth to a verbal fatty degeneration that revealed the degeneration of the life it sprang from, in a world whose actual deity was the goddess Success. . . . The magazine-poets did not reverence life—they only said so; and they sought for the pretty and the charming but not for beauty. The passions they claimed were not real passions; their heartbreaks never broke their hearts."<sup>1</sup>

Into such a superficial literary world came Edwin Arlington Robinson with an honesty and simplicity that was like a breath of fresh air. As Mark Van Doren said of him:

"Beginning to write when there was no good poetry being written in the United States . . . he made his way silently through the obscurity which wrapped him for a decade. Coming then into his own among those judges, however few they were, who were competent to pronounce upon him he remained uninfluenced by anything save his own purpose and his own conscience."<sup>2</sup>

This impression of Robinson's bigness is further heightened by Harriet Monroe's description of him as

"adequate, uncompromising, a big man, a thorough and keen-visioned artist. . . . He struck his own path and found, no doubt with surprise, that he had blazed a trail for others."<sup>3</sup>

What kind of man was this Robinson? What qualities in him called forth such praise?

### I. HIS INTEGRITY

Integrity was the dominating quality of his life and work. His career was all of one piece, being devoted wholly to poetry of a high standard. Even at the age of fifty, living in a poorly-heated, ill-lighted, poverty-blighted room on a back street of Brooklyn's railroad district, he continued to hold to his stoic ideal of rigid devotion to his work. He "never wrote magazine articles or mystery novels or memoirs, or edited anthologies or went on lecture tours or gave university courses in Creative Appreciation." His motto seems to have been, "This one thing I do." He was a poet and nothing else.

In his early years of maturity he lived in Yonkers, where only a year earlier John Masefield rose from his saloon porter's job to literary fame. Here Robinson eked out a frugal existence. For a while he was a time-keeper on a subway construction project. President Roosevelt, enthused over his "Children of the Night," rescued him with a sinecure in the New York Customs Office. Here he stayed four years. But all these jobs were temporary excursions. Robinson lived to write poetry, and he had a religious devotion to his purpose. "Lack of recognition never caused him to compromise his ideals; long-delayed recognition, when it came, found him still true to his own first vision, still revealing without comment or explanation the inner light of his spirit." His steadfast, shining faith and concentrated devotion to his work was a discipline of the soul which was akin to the essence of religion.

Such self-discipline translated itself into extreme reticence. So painfully shy that he talked little, covered up most of the facts of his life, and never married, he opened the shutters of his mind only through his verses. There we see the austere dignity of his New England heritage; there he mirrored the agnosticism of his literary masters: Zola, Thomas Hardy and Shakespeare; there he disclosed his penetrating awareness of the overtones and undercurrents of life; there he flung out the banner of his blazing loyalty to high ideals. Of Robinson, even more than of most writers, it may be said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

### II. HIS ARTISTRY

His poetry conveys this discipline in its very form. His style is a unit. "You cannot pry thought and expression apart." His poems are

organic, indivisible. Even his humor was "part of the warp and woof of his poems, . . . incorporated to the characters and intimately blended with the essence of the themes." He is singularly difficult to quote adequately. One must read his poems, not the reviews or the quotations, to get the effect of his writing, for it is cumulative rather than fragmentary. His poetry is similar to good preaching by a pastor week after week, as distinguished from the brilliant episodic oratory of the platform pulpiteer.

His disciplined integrity extends to his use of words. His clipped economy of phrase is one of his Yankee traits. He refused to waste words; his lines are models of concentrated thought. Drenched with meaning, his sentences often glitter with scintillating brilliance. His phrases thrust with stiletto accuracy to the heart of a subject. He was a craftsman with words, meticulous in his manipulation of sounds and in his fitting of phrases to ideas. Because his ideal was artistic excellence in conveying the maximum of thought, his poetry is tightly woven, compressed and close-lipped. One critic described it as "solid strokes of meaning welded to subtle shades of expression." He achieved this precision and power through a profound respect for words. He hunted out words, he treasured words, he reveled in words. They were the tools of his craft and he handled them with all the loving care of a master cabinetmaker. The result is that his poetry is suffused with words, eternal words, choral words, triumphant words that thrill the mind and lift the soul.

If we preachers only had that reverence for the words we use! Too many of us are in the company of Robinson's poetic contemporaries, "prophets of dead words," men

"Who fashion in a shrewd, mechanic way  
Songs without souls, that flicker for a day,  
To vanish in irrevocable night."<sup>4</sup>

If we are to avoid such a catastrophe we must catch the sense of mission actuating these lines:

"The prophet of dead words defeats himself;  
Whoever would acknowledge and include  
The foregleam and the glory of the real,  
Must work with something else than pen and ink  
And painful preparation; he must work  
With unseen implements that have no names.  
And he must win, withal, to do that work,  
Good fortitude, clean wisdom, and strong skill."<sup>4</sup>

How well Robinson fulfilled his own ideal is attested by the Pulitzer Prizes for poetry which came to him in 1921, 1925 and 1927.

### III. HIS INSIGHT INTO HUMAN NATURE

Robinson was much more than an illuminating example of a man wholly dedicated to his task and possessing a disciplined mastery of his tools for that task. He was a first-rate psychiatrist, an interpreter of human character. He believed "that the essential drama of life lies in the inward effect of experience upon the spirit."

We go into his background to discover the source of his insight. Born in Gardiner, Maine, in 1869, he grew up in a family and in a town whose fortunes were slipping away. The decline of shipping from New England ports and the growth of industry in other sections of the nation brought a blight to the coastal region. His father, a banker and businessman, was caught in this depression, and Edwin left Harvard after two undistinguished years there. Josiah Royce was one of the lights of that university and seems to have exercised considerable influence upon young Robinson. After about four uneventful years at home he went to New York, and there he stayed for most of the rest of his life. One trip to England and several stays in the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire were his only interludes.

Robinson started out with an intimate clinical knowledge of human character which comes from long residence in any small town. In his "New England: Indian Summer" Van Wyck Brooks says:

"Gardiner abounded in men who had once been important and who had no life any longer to shape to their code. Their minds had been formed for a large way of living. They had set the tone for their neighbors and headed their clans. But they had no clans to lead now, and the making of laws was not for them; they were left with the 'dusty ruins of their fathers' dreams.' They had lost their confidence as the years went by, and they crept away into their houses and grew queerer and queerer. Eccentricities multiplied on humbler levels also, and misery walked patch-clad through the streets. There was never a more wintry world, as Robinson saw it. . . . Death pervaded the air, and what remained of life seemed to have reached a state of fossilization. . . . The people were village-bound, and they were house-bound."<sup>1</sup>

But behind the shutters of the houses and behind the inner shutters of men's souls raced deep passions and consuming fires. Robinson pried open the blinds and revealed the strange lives within. Old feuds, blistering memories, secret sorrows, valiant courage, patient endurance, whimsical winsomeness, all these are found in his poems about Tilbury Town people.

He possessed a scalpel-like skill in revealing the quirks of character unseen by the casual acquaintance. One of his most-quoted poems is "Richard Cory."

"Whenever Richard Cory went down town,

We people on the pavement looked at him:

He was a gentleman from sole to crown,

Clean favored, and imperially slim.

"And he was always quietly arrayed,

And he was always human when he talked;

But still he fluttered pulses when he said,

'Good morning,' and he glittered when he walked.

"And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—

And admirably schooled in every grace:

In fine, we thought that he was everything

To make us wish that we were in his place.

"So on we worked, and waited for the light

And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;

And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,

Went home, and put a bullet through his head."<sup>4</sup>

Robinson's intimate knowledge of persons' foibles gave him a sardonic "persimmon humor." His wit is a quizzical cocking of an eyebrow, a chuckle at life's incongruities, a caustic exposure of its rottennesses. His humor runs in step with pain. "Miniver Cheevy," "Captain Craig," "Isaac and Archibald" and many another poem show us that there are

". . . woven with his jollities

The nameless and eternal tragedies

That render hope and hopelessness akin."<sup>4</sup>

No pastor can read Robinson's poetry with its psychiatric insights and not come away without a sharpening of his own senses. Any minister with a sympathetic soul will deepen his understanding and refresh his tolerance through this man's studies of the depths and intricacies of human character. He writes of spinsters who show "the patient ardor of the unpursued." He returns again and again to the labyrinthine problems of married folk, and to the torturing neuritis of unfulfilled love. The hidden worth of ostracized hermits lies revealed in many of his verses.

Upon this background of village life Robinson added a foreground of acquaintance with the peculiar persons who walk a city's streets. He was most interested in failures, in men whom life had left behind. His concern was with those lost souls who had missed their way, whose abilities

went unused and unseen, whose inner graces were half-suffocated in the stuffy, blatant commercialism that dominated American life. Very often these men were rebels, maladjusted to a greedy world, and Robinson saw in them qualities of true character and worth.

"Most of Robinson's lost souls possessed some spirituality, and it was just for this reason that they were 'lost.' The people who were queer were the people who were real. Such was Robinson's message for an age of rebels."<sup>1</sup>

This is still true, especially in rural communities. I have a friend whose avocation is archaeology and regional history. He claims that in his travels he has found that the persons who seem "slightly screwy" really have positive contributions to make to life. They have, in his words, "something on the ball." We can use some of Robinson's appreciation of these misfits.

#### IV. HIS RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

The goddess of \$uccess, spelled with a dollar sign, had bewitched men in that expansionist period of American history. Prosperity dulled men's consciences and stifled their creativity. The decline in poetry, in statesmanship and in education afflicted Henry Adams and many others. One only needs to recall Bronson Alcott's radical divergence from the tinkering, mechanically inventive Connecticut Yankee to see the gap confronting Robinson decades later. He was one of the persistent Protestants against the aggressive materialism of his day.

"Dear friends, reproach me not for what I do,  
Nor counsel me, nor pity me; nor say  
That I am wearing half my life away  
For bubble-work that only fools pursue.  
• • • • •

The shame I win for singing is all mine,  
The gold I miss for dreaming is all yours."<sup>4</sup>

The younger writers who, before and after World War I, were rebels against this business-dominated society followed in his wake, and "the better they expressed their minds, the surer they were to express them in terms for which Robinson had prepared the way. For just as he had swept the house for all that was truthful and loyal in living, he had swept it for plain speaking, veracity and candor."

Robinson's religion was more than a protest against arrogant materialism. He also slashed at the dry-as-dust, lifeless formalism which mas-

queraded as religion, now that the growing days of Puritanism were over. He castigated the conventional forms of faith which kept men floundering in fear. The hypocrisy of nominal religion received the cutting thrust of his scorn. The easy wordiness of cheap morality was exposed in all its tawdriness. With the fire of his passionate contempt he boiled the water out of the sap that flowed so freely and so insipidly from the churchly sugar-bushes of his generation.

Robinson shared the literary agnosticism of his time. Thomas Hardy was his ideal, coming to him in his youth as "the world's first murmur, large and clear, flung from a singing river's endless race." Hardy's grim realism is found in Robinson's outlook upon the world. A wintry chill descended upon his soul as he viewed its foolishness and futility. To an early reviewer who wrote in 1897, "His humor is of a grim sort, and the world is not beautiful to him, but a prison-house," Robinson replied, "The world is not a prison-house, but a kind of spiritual kindergarten where millions of bewildered infants are trying to spell God with the wrong blocks." He described mankind as

"Most like some crazy regiment at arms,  
Undisciplined of aught but Ignorance,  
And ever led resourcelessly along  
To brainless carnage by drunk trumpeters."<sup>4</sup>

Looking into the future he was haunted by the prospect that

"We through the dust of downward years may scan  
The onslaught that awaits this idiot world  
Where blood pays blood for nothing, and where life  
Pays life to madness."<sup>4</sup>

To such a decomposing world he brought the healing analysis:

"We do not fight today, we only die;  
We are too proud of death, and too ashamed  
Of God, to know enough to be alive."<sup>4</sup>

Robinson's caustic realism sees in literature

". . . the shame  
And emptiness of what our souls reveal  
In books that are as altars where we kneel  
To consecrate the flicker, not the flame."<sup>4</sup>

No wonder that when he died in 1935 he went with a wry smile upon his face from some last joke!

But there was a mellower aspect of Robinson's writing. His religion included a firm faith in the Light that guides the seeker. Early in life he wrote his "Credo."

"I cannot find my way; there is no star  
In all the shrouded heavens anywhere;  
And there is not a whisper in the air  
Of any living voice but one so far  
That I can hear it only as a bar  
Of lost, imperial music, played when fair  
And angel fingers wove, and unaware,  
Dead leaves to garlands where no roses are.

"No, there is not a glimmer, nor a call,  
For one that welcomes, welcomes when he fears,  
The black and awful chaos of the night;  
For through it all—above, beyond it all—  
I know the far-sent message of the years,  
I feel the coming glory of the Light."<sup>4</sup>

This figure of "The Light" recurs over and over again in his poetry. It is the expression of Robinson's hazy but seeking faith. It is a Light which "shines ever dimly but revealingly behind the far invisible horizon of the soul's destiny. As if in conflict with his bitter and disillusioned skepticism he exhibits also a faith in the mystic promise that beyond all triumph or disaster there is the new dawn of a new spiritual day."<sup>1</sup>

"And though forlornly joyless be the ways  
We travel, the compensate spirit-gleams  
Of wisdom shaft the darkness here and there,  
Like scattered lamps in unfrequented streets."<sup>4</sup>

He is a preacher of the inner light which brings a personal courage.

"He sees beyond the groaning borough lines  
Of Hell, God's highways gleaming, and he knows  
That Love's complete communion is the end  
Of anguish to the liberated man."<sup>4</sup>

This awareness of God in human affairs, half-hidden, half-revealed, shines through the murky shadows of much of Robinson's poetry.

"And when we do so frantically strive  
To win strange faith, why do we shun to know  
That in love's elemental over-glow  
God's wholeness gleams with light superlative?  
O, brother men, if you have eyes at all,  
Look at a branch, a bird, a child, a rose,

Or anything God ever made that grows—  
 Nor let the smallest vision of it slip,  
 Till you may read, as on Belshazzar's wall,  
 The glory of eternal partnership.”<sup>4</sup>

A sense of man's great mission is Robinson's major mood. Life, in spite of its follies and futilities, offers high rewards to him who will pay the price. The necessity of consecration is Robinson's chief message. He was possessed by the driving imperatives of truth. He could do nothing but write and live in truth's light. His clear-cut craftsmanship was simply a worthy tool for the expression of eternal verities.

John Drinkwater, writing an introduction to the English edition of Robinson's poem's said:

“Every poet of importance from Aeschylus to Mr. Robinson has fearlessly recognized this principle (the essentialness of moral purpose) in his art. Mr. Robinson wants to instruct no one; but moral purpose and pity burn passionately, though with a quiet flame, throughout his work.”<sup>5</sup>

#### V. A VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

Robinson's pessimism and his hope received confirmation during the days of the first World War. During those dark years he turned to the past, producing a cycle of long poems dealing with the Arthurian legends. “Lancelot” and “Merlin” were “pictures of world in solution. In their presentation of the collapse of civilization, of the chaotic disintegration of its ideals, there is a poignant regret at the inevitable passing of beauty; a pathetic acknowledgment of the failure of human relationships.” But these poems also carry “a profound conviction of the ultimate efficacy of moral idealism” and they herald the dawn on far horizons of a new order imperfectly foreshadowed.

In “Lancelot” this epic theme of the world's overthrow gets its highest expression. That poem is a record of valorous chivalry, of colossal contests, and of ultimate tragedy. Lancelot, plunging his nation into ruin because of a passion he could not control, was haunted by the vision of the Grail he could not win until he sacrificed the love that was both his life and his death.

The burden of Robinson's song during the war years was that war and lust and disloyalty must bring about a holocaust until out of the suffering comes a higher consciousness bearing a new life and a new way.

In these days when the tides of war mount higher and higher we, too,

## RELIGION IN LIFE

need to look with farseeing eyes at the impending doom of our way of life. If we can possess our souls in courage and hope and vision we may match our men against our madness and win a victory. Certainly we will act and live as Christians when we consecrate our powers to the creative tasks of building a better world out of the ruins of corrupt commercialism and divisive nationalism. We face a greater imperative than Robinson knew in 1916. The light that shone upon his mind blazes with floodlight intensity upon ours in these days of world conflict. We, too, have a faith that says:

"For through it all—above, beyond it all—  
I know the far-sent message of the years,  
I feel the coming glory of the Light."<sup>4</sup>

Unless we see that Light and follow it we will repeat the ancient tragedy of "Calvary."

"Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow,  
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit free,  
Stung by the mob that came to see the show,  
The Master toiled along to Calvary;  
We gibed Him, as He went, with houndish glee,  
Till His dimmed eyes for us did overflow;  
We cursed His vengeless hands thrice wretchedly—  
And this was nineteen hundred years ago.

"But after nineteen hundred years the shame  
Still clings, and we have not made good the loss  
That outraged faith has entered in His name.  
Ah, when shall come love's courage to be strong!  
Tell me, O Lord—tell me, O Lord, how long  
Are we to keep Christ writhing on the cross?"<sup>4</sup>

*References*

<sup>1</sup> *New England: Indian Summer*, by Van Wyck Brooks. E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc. (New York).

<sup>2</sup> *Edwin Arlington Robinson*, by Mark Van Doren. The Literary Guild of America, Inc. (New York).

<sup>3</sup> *Poets and Their Art*, by Harriet Monroe. The Macmillan Company (New York).

<sup>4</sup> *Children of the Night*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Charles Scribner's Sons (New York).

<sup>5</sup> *The Muse in Council*, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Company (Boston).

# We Neglect So Great a Salvation

LOUIS WILLIAM NORRIS

**C**HISTIANITY in America is not creating a desire for salvation. Communicants in churches are not faced with the decisive importance of its attainment. Decline in evangelistic services has dimmed out the question, "Are you saved?" Many in the Church and most of those out of it have ceased to look upon the Church as the exclusive agency outside of which there is no salvation. Some do not realize that any agency provides salvation. Youth grow up without knowing the importance of a frequent inventory on this item in their spiritual stock.

## I

Significance of these facts has impressed the writer in a course on the philosophy of religion for undergraduates. Students never mention the term and are puzzled by any reference to it on the part of the instructor. Even when translated into such rough approximations as "integration," "right relation to God," "adjustment to the good," or "loyalty to growth," the concept arouses but a faint response. No tears should be shed over the death of a venerable term that has lived a long and useful life. But the plain fact is that these students do not have the *idea* of salvation in their mental world. They do not hear the term nor the idea expressed in their homes nor their churches (and the majority of them do go to church at least occasionally). Much has been written about the undoubted biblical illiteracy of students, but not enough about their doctrinal ignorance.

Conceivably a generation might have a (to be sure, very thin), measure of religion without any accurate knowledge of the Bible. But it is not conceivable that it could have a Christian religion without beliefs, and in particular without the belief in a God who through the agency of Christ is seeking to save that which is lost. Christianity is feeling and action, too, but a religious faith means faith in something. If no one has sufficient faith in God to include the process of salvation, there is grave doubt that such a thing as a living Christian faith exists. If the older generation is not transmitting its faith to youth in terms of salvation is it transmitting a Christian faith at all? Youth wants to find religion, but can they if there is no idea of salvation in what they find?

Even a cursory reading of St. Paul, or of Augustine, Calvin, or Wesley, reveals that the basic factor in Christianity has been held to be salvation. Braden rightly shows that this is the most significant point at which comparisons with other religions should be drawn.<sup>1</sup> Pratt's question, "Can We Keep the Faith?"<sup>2</sup> should be answered in the negative unless we structuralize that faith with the idea of salvation. However Christianity may be defined,<sup>3</sup> it must at least contain the idea that Christ helps God save the souls of men. A conception of salvation is an indispensable means of transmitting Christianity from generation to generation.

It is not necessary to insist on a narrow, single-track definition of salvation for the seriousness of this situation to be apparent. Salvation means, fundamentally, that spiritual state in which man, aware of failure to attain the highest Christian virtues, is moved to seek those loyalties shown by Christ to be acceptable to God. Whether the term be defined as a positive or negative, individual or social, this-worldly or other-worldly process, or as an opportunity open to few or many, as initiated by God or man, attainable by faith or works, the fact remains that there is little clear-cut emphasis on the idea of salvation in any of these senses. The "longing for redemption" said to characterize all men is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of"—forgetfulness. The need of man's entering into conscious harmony with the purposes of God which Jesus stressed, and the benefits derived from such co-operating, as well as the tragic consequences of neglecting to do so, must be defined over and over. Specific concern to discover whether this state of affairs exists must be made the prime concern of man if he is a Christian believer. Reinhold Niebuhr may be right in saying that the disaster of our time is the irrelevance, not the incredibility of salvation.<sup>4</sup>

## II

Why the notion of salvation has been so greatly neglected may be explained in various ways. In the first place, it is doubtless a continuance of the reaction to Calvinism. The fatalism of Calvinistic theology made many lose their self-respect and their respect for God. Rejection of the idea that God elects certain of His children for salvation brought with

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Charles S. Braden, *Man's Quest for Salvation*. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1941.

<sup>2</sup> James Bissett Pratt, *Can We Keep the Faith?* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Charles Clayton Morrison, *What is Christianity?* Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1941, for a recent discussion of this problem.

<sup>4</sup> *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. Vol. I, p. 23. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941.

it on the other hand failure to retain belief that God had any essential part in the salvation of man. Growth in self-reliance came with conquest of the frontiers. Self-reliance replaced God-reliance. Second, the widespread acceptance of the theory of evolution led many to suppose a gradual and almost necessary salvation of all men. Laws of human character were considered to express divine laws of spirit. The need of salvation from sin was replaced by confidence in development.<sup>5</sup> Third, the enormous prestige of science in this country has led many to believe that all problems, even the destiny of the soul, can be solved by science. For others the authority of science has meant that God was confined to the processes of nature, or else that the realms of space were so vast that personal contact between God and the soul was inconceivable.

Fourthly, pragmatism has had a hand in eclipsing the idea of salvation. A utilitarian, short-range, and relative standard of values such as pragmatism has encouraged, has discouraged attention to the cosmic status of value such as a theory of salvation requires. "Scholarships," easy prizes in radio and movie shows, indicate the wide demand for immediate satisfactions. If it works to believe that values are near by and not to be gained through registry with the cosmic firm, so much the worse for the idea of salvation through the agency of God. If sin is only a failure to make good, a better adjustment is possible the next time.

Two other circumstances are symptoms and perhaps also causes for the neglect of salvation. Both factors are found in education. In secular education so much has been made of "interests" and their miraculous power to reach toward the proper ends that the essential goodness of human nature has been presupposed. Rousseau's idea of the inherent goodness of man makes any idea of salvation irrelevant, for man does not need to be rescued from sin. "Progressive" education with its laxity in discipline has been a serious offender here. In religious education the change from the tactics of revival to those of character education, while avoiding the weaknesses of emotionalism in evangelistic services, has lost the idea of salvation. The old emphasis on conversion had the great merit of requiring decision and of pointing out the danger of procrastination. Religious education, being a long-term program, has often failed to impress its candidates with the need of periodically confronting the arbiter of destiny with a view to discovering what one's status is.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel D. Williams, *The Andover Liberals*. New York: King's Crown Press, 1941. p. 158.

Other reasons may be given, but they are mostly derivatives of those already mentioned. Sometimes it is said, for example, that those who talk about "salvation" are themselves refutations of the values they offer. Or it is said that salvation is too far off an event and present problems demand attention. Again, salvation is held to be vague and unimportant. But these suggestions do not reach fundamentals in the case.

Even if these are not the main causes for neglect of the idea of salvation, none can deny the fact of neglect and the seriousness of this omission. The chief problem concerns remedies that may be available.

### III

One way to vitalize the process of salvation is to emphasize the value of persons, both human and divine. A view of God as a person is an absolute essential for any significant experience of salvation. The God of the prophets and of Jesus was clearly a divine personality. Much of the New Testament loses its meaning if the God with whom Jesus was concerned is not a person. A God who was as concerned about the welfare of man as a shepherd for his one hundredth sheep, or the householder for the lost coin, or the father for his prodigal son, was not an abstract principle. Christianity was born through faith in a divine person, grew to maturity in that faith, and has been enriching the globe on the strength of it. Salvation is impossible without it.

Influences of naturalism in contemporary religious thought have tended to obliterate the personality of God. Wieman's conception of God as "the growth of organic unity making for mutuality and community" is not so much false as half true and incompletely Christian. Dewey's view of God as the "active relation between ideal and actual"<sup>6</sup> at work in nature and society is also a truncated and indeterminate Something scarcely calculated to challenge human persons to seek salvation.

Recent science has done good service in expanding and articulating the structure of God. But frequently this work has been interpreted to mean that it is childish to think longer of God as a person. How ideals and values can be given cosmic status without being thought of as integral to a cosmic personality is a standing philosophical problem not satisfactorily solved by naturalists. It is not to save a mere theological doctrine such as salvation that the personality of God must be insisted on, but it is to

<sup>6</sup> *A Common Faith*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934. p. 51.

make intelligible the transactions between man and the author and conserver of values.

On the other hand, the significance of finite persons in an industrial and totalitarian age must be discovered if salvation is to be an actuality. Attempts of behaviorists to obliterate the autonomy of conscious persons have largely spent themselves. Before World War II scattered efforts were being made to reclaim persons in leisure hours who had been tyrannized by machines in their daily labor. This need is even greater during the pressure of war production, and the fact that it is not being met will leave one of the ugliest scars of the war. Democracies are engaged in a death struggle ostensibly to save the individual person from obliteration by a domineering state. But even within the democracies themselves there continues the grave danger that in the concentrated effort to break totalitarianism they may take from their members an individuality that will not be given back. This overpowering dominance of social institutions characteristic now both of totalitarian states and democracies is a serious hindrance to a vital experience of salvation for this generation. Human persons must be conscious of their distinct nature and worth before any significant transactions with God are possible.

A second way in which salvation may be made more vital is for clergymen and teachers to lay stress on the judgment of God. So much fun has been made of Jonathan Edwards' preaching that it has been forgotten that he helped greatly to bring about a religious awakening. The idea of hell may have suffered from its intimation that God was powerless to reclaim the degenerate, or for its appeal to fear, or because of its too frequently spatial conceptions, but it did have the merit of showing that wrongdoing made a difference to man's status in the universe. Graduation from the idea of hell and commencement in the new age of ethical relativism has had a serious effect upon the definiteness of religious growth. Though God may not write down in grave earnestness all misdeeds of man in a big black book forever to be held against him, there must be a record of some kind. Hegel's view that "World history is the world judge" was perhaps a too mechanistic view of judgment. Yet he did show that human actions are registered in the parchment of time.

Divine forgiveness and love have been preached so much that the need for forgiveness and the probability that it may not be directly given has been forgotten. Until man discovers that God is a being whose stand-

ards of value are not to be trifled with he will not have sufficient respect for God to trouble about qualifying for salvation. Rudolf Otto's emphasis on "awe" in the presence of God faithfully touches a presupposition of man's quest for salvation. What apocalypticism there was in Jesus' teaching helped to give urgency to man's decision about what to do with the will of God. This urgency, without the apocalypticism, must be impressed upon our generation.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, salvation may become vital by constant insistence upon the contemporaneousness of Christ. Christ's work may have been done in Palestine, notably at Calvary, but it is mostly still to be done. This generation knows nothing about "a lamb of God" that takes away the sins of the world, for it scarcely ever sees a lamb and never offers a sacrifice. A Christ that gave His life "a ransom for many" indicates a capricious God and a saved generation that is past. Such conceptions as "satisfaction," "propitiation," "substitution," "penal example," are terms that even as figures of speech smack of a musty past.

Yet a Christ that remains a continuous challenge to slipshod morals, a contrast to man's average selfishness, a standing adviser that many of the richest values require sacrifice and pain, will not leave man unrelated to God. Cadbury showed that one must note "The Peril of Modernizing Jesus," but a worse peril lies in making Him only ancient. Though the man of today may not understand a "lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," he does understand a Christ that is the lamp of God "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." In these days let there be light!

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Buckham's suggestion that God must be conceived as Father and not as Sovereign, should include the notion of a father who exacts a high level of performance from his children. (Cf. John Wright Buckham, "Is God Father or Sovereign?" *Christian Century*, LIX [1942], 1116-1117.)

# Public Prayer

CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER

**A**NYONE who tries to pray by himself in the silence of his own room recognizes the inadequacy of words. How can he freeze into words the tumultuous flow of emotions that cascade up and down his nervous system? How can he hammer into sentences fine shades of thought and feeling? How can he lift up his voice to God in reality and truth?

As a matter of simple fact, such expression is almost impossible. Any-one who prays by himself knows this to be true. There are long periods of silence when he searches for the right words to say. There are periods of deeper silence and even mysticism when, on bended knee, he bows in adoration before God; moments when he arises to pace the floor, when he extends his arms in restless gesture, when tears come to his eyes, moments when he relaxes in the chair while divine peace pervades his whole being.

If this is true of the man who prays by himself, consider the plight of the minister who tries to pray in public. Laboring under the same limitations of language he, too, finds it difficult to put into words the thought and feeling of the hour. Try as he will, the words which come from his mouth do not quite tell the truth. Often they are understate-ments of a reality experience which involves not only the mind with its familiar concepts and words, but the whole passionate life of a man.

Perhaps it is a pity that he is not trained in the formal religious dance. Then he could emphasize his speech to God with bodily action. There might even be sustained moments of silence during which the changing, rhythmic movements of the body would swiftly and beautifully convey his religious emotions. It is not without reason that some social and reli-gious groups think of the dance as the most sacred of all the arts, to be preceded by silence and fasting. For centuries the dance lingered in the Christian cultus, and though it finally all but disappeared, its memory is preserved in the ceremonial aspects of the liturgy, particularly in the sig-nificant and almost rhythmic movement of the mass. Many a man is able to perceive the wisdom of these words by Havelock Ellis, "If we are in-different to the art of dancing, we have failed to understand not merely

the supreme manifestation of physical life, but also the supreme symbol of spiritual life."

This is a way of saying that prayer proceeds from the deep, earthly roots of one's whole being. Prayer is much more than the intellectual recognition of God. It is all that Rudolph Otto meant when he described the trembling, awe and breathlessness which one experienced in his encounter with God, a transaction that involved the profound "numinous" response of the whole life to the "mysterium tremendum."

Prayer that is purely conceptual is very thin indeed. During an hour of worship, when a man really contemplates the Lord of heaven and earth and the Father of infinite love, he does more than meditate. He also feels. The deep nervous impulses of the body mingle with the concepts of the mind to result in the complete reality experience of religion. The emotions of love mingle with concepts of duty to result in the final prayer attitude of redemptive activity.

Well might we ask ourselves the question, "How can the nervous impulses and body action which one experiences when he really prays, be expressed through speech?" One answer may be found in the Negro spirituals. Think of the rhythmic movement of the whole body at the source of such a spiritual as this:

"Nobody knows the trouble I've seen,  
Nobody knows but Jesus;  
Nobody knows the trouble I've seen,  
Glory halleluliah.

"Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down,  
O yes, Lord!  
Sometimes I'm almost to the groun',  
O yes, Lord!

"Nobody knows the trouble I've seen,  
Nobody knows but Jesus;  
Nobody knows the trouble I've seen,  
Glory halleluliah."

Read the psalms, and one discovers another answer, for the same rhythmic movement, the same vital, pungent language used in the spirituals, is often used in the psalms. Even such a chastened sentence as this has its physical basis, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." It requires no great imagination for us to follow the gestures which take the hands from mouth to heart to open and wide-flung extension.

All too often, however, the prayer impulse does not come to this fine expression, but is thwarted by the difficulties of language. Words tend to frustrate our natural response to God. Our problem is to make spoken prayer an adequate vehicle for the whole rich and complex prayer experience. We must learn how to express prayer through words as effectively as it might be expressed through the dance or in the freedom of one's own room.

Such a study takes us into the world of poetry and prose, that world of literature which does more than convey information. Certainly the mood of the prayer moment is often poetic. How can one sense the tremendous presence of God without knowing that adoration which tends to express itself in poetry, which speaks

"Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

Even the form of prayer is often poetic. Think of the long balanced cadence of the psalms which reflect the uninhibited joy of the Hebrew people as they danced in prayer before the Lord. Think of the Negro spirituals on one level and those prayers in the form of poetry on another level, such as are found in Hoyland's *Book of Prayers* for use in an Indian college. In contemporary usage, however, the form of public prayer is prose rather than poetry, though the spirit of the prayer may be poetic.

Unfortunately, too many of us mistake the prose of prayer for the prose of journalism or philosophical exposition or even argument. Many a prayer sounds like a page from the newspaper or a chapter from the religious book-of-the-month or the brief of a promising young attorney. Such prayers are the result of our carelessness regarding the nature of literature. Such prayers never become the adequate expression of religious experience.

In his *Essay on Pope*, Thomas DeQuincy makes an important distinction between the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. "The function of the first is to teach; the function of the second is to move; the first is a rudder, the second an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always through affections of pleasure and sympathy." The minister must be aware of this distinction in

making his public prayer, for if it is to gather up the prayer impulse of the whole congregation it must enter the realm of literature itself, the literature of power, where moving expression is given to the adoration and penitence, the hopes and fears and dreams of mankind.

William Hazlitt, in his *Essay on Poetry in General*, brings this distinction to life when he says, "Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry; contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair or madness, are all poetry." This is the basic material of prayer and this poetry of religion must be given correct and adequate expression through the public prayer of the minister. When he stands before the lectern or kneels at his prie-dieu he is not only in relationship to the realm of religion but also to that of literature.

In discussing "The Nature of Literature," Professor Henry Wells, of Columbia University, writes what every leader of worship might well take to heart: "A feeling for the special function of words, their kinship but not identity with music, their fitness to bear social and philosophical ideas and their peculiar lights and shadows untranslatable into other artistic form, becomes a large part of the wisdom of both the poet and the critic. Many of the most serious faults in both poets and critics arise from their occasional inability to grasp the significance of the fact that literature is first of all the art of words." (*The Judgment of Literature*—p. 26.)

This emphasis upon prayer as a form of nervous energy which struggles for expression through physical manifestations and finally through the literature of power, which is concerned with the right arrangements of words, may seem a little academic. Yet the last poor prayer you heard in church probably left you disappointed because it broke down at this point. The minister did not know how to use words. Probably he did not even know the nature of the problem he confronted. The last prayer like this that I heard was an economic exposition. It began something like this: "O Lord, we confess our sin in the unequal distribution of wealth in the world, in the economic instability which we have helped to produce by our high tariff barriers, our foreign investments and our hoarding of the world's supply of gold. We have participated in an economy of *laissez faire* which has brought us to this pass. . . ." The last poor prayer I heard before this economic treatise was a pleasant chat, in the style of a newspaper columnist, with the Lord Jesus: "Blessed Jesus,

we're so glad that you are here with us tonight. We're a pretty weak outfit, but you can give us strength. We are all mottled with sin and mistake, but you can wash us as white as snow. In fact, Lord, what ciphers we would be if it was not for you. . . . ”

In the words of Francis Jeffrey, “This will never do.” There is nothing wrong with the religious sentiments which are struggling for expression in these prayers. Unfortunately, these sentiments never really come to expression because the respective worship leaders were not familiar with the usages of words. No, when the awful moment of public prayer arrives it is not merely academic to understand that the moment is also a literary one. Of course, a man must have some religious experience to express in his public prayer. We are assuming that he is a Christian who loves both God and his neighbor. But such a man will be frustrated in the liturgical expression of his religion unless he is at home in the literature of power.

How, then, shall we crystallize into language the compelling impulses of prayer to God? Here are five suggestions, each one of which is pointed in the direction of simplicity. A good point could be scored against the careless, uncouth prayer as being too involved and complex. Such a prayer twists up into a maze of complex concepts and bad grammar. The good prayer is always simple.

i. Therefore let us use simple concepts in our prayers. After all, prayer is neither a theological dissertation nor yet a scientific, economic or sociological one. We need to avoid the technical word or phrase, the involved concept, the theological cliché. These abstractions are far removed from the elemental simplicity of the dance. If the prayer impulse is going to find adequate expression through words it must speak through the simple concepts of ordinary speech and experience, the thought patterns that are familiar to men and women all around the world. The Prayer for Absolution comes as close to theological language as a prayer ought to come. The Collect for Grace is even better. We can all understand it because its patterns of thought are part of the common life of mankind.

“O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the same with Thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings, being ordered by Thy governance, may be righteous in Thy sight; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

2. Let us use simple words as well as simple concepts. Nouns and verbs are preferable to adjectives, because nouns and verbs are more elemental. Most prayers would be improved if they were stripped of their adjectives and clothed with good, concrete nouns and tingling verbs. Only in a particular kind of prayer, one which is very close to poetry, is the generous use of adjectives effective. Notice the emphasis upon nouns and verbs in the greatest prayer of Christendom, the "Our Father, who art in heaven. . . ."

3. Let us use simple sentence structures. Many a congregation could address its needs to God if it was able to follow the minister out of a tangle of complex sentences and involved statements from which he was trying to extricate himself. Think of the plight of the people who were asked to read aloud with the minister the following words:

"O God, who appointest all things to a destined and holy end, and requirest of a man a reasonable service; quicken in us we beseech Thee the sense of a gracious presence and power in the world, of a providence that never slumbers, of a love that never fails, and so unite us with Thyself in our aspirations and thoughts that with our whole might doing those things which please Thee we may live in Thy favor and in that light which ever broadens to the perfect day."

Perhaps this is a collect that ran away with itself. Whatever it is, the punctuation is faulty and the sentiment too involved in complex sentence structure. The true collect is the only complex sentence structure that a minister will need to use in his prayers. It is composed of four parts and a conclusion: an invocation, followed by a clause referring to the divine nature, a special petition sometimes accompanied by a related second petition, a statement of the purpose for which the gift is asked, and the conclusion. The second collect in Common Prayer is an excellent example of this very nice form. It begins with the words, "Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures. . . ."

4. Let us use simple prose rhythms. A fine prose rhythm gives beauty and vitality to any piece of literature. If you have once read the opening paragraphs of Matthew Arnold's essay on Emerson, the beauty of those lines will haunt your mind until the day that you come to die. Their beauty rests upon a fine prose rhythm. If you have once read such a contemporary proseman as Walter Lippman, you will recognize again the importance of prose rhythm, for it is the factor which gives his writing such virility.

We can readily see how great is the difference between a prayer that

stumbles along like the one with the involved sentence structures just quoted and a prayer that flows along like this one by John Henry Newman:

"O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, of Thy great mercy, grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest, and place at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

One could not possibly forget such memorable lines. Perhaps some people are not sensitive to the freer forms of rhythm, and that is why so many prayers stumble and falter along like mechanical men trying to walk. Certainly such a prose rhythm is not achieved overnight or by devoutly wishing for it. Like the other achievements of literature, it comes after a minister has read carefully and written often and thoughtfully. The man who is contemptuous about writing a prayer is not likely to have enough prose rhythm to make his prayer remembered for the rest of the day.

5. Let us use simple patterns of prayer. When we are called upon for an invocation, let us simply invoke the presence of God upon the service. When we are asked to prepare a collect, let us study this form, which is as precise as a sonnet is in poetry. Then let us succinctly summarize our prayer mood in a true collect rather than in some indefinite kind of short prayer.

When we are asked to give a free prayer let us find some simple pattern through which to express ourselves. In this opportunity we may rejoice, for free prayer is the most satisfactory of all the forms of prayer because it is closer to the original prayer impulse than such a highly developed form, let us say, as the litany. It is more like the free interpretive dance than any other kind of prayer. It gathers up the tensions of life in some easily understood pattern. Sometimes it is utterly free; one idea follows another and a cascade of emotions is crystallized into glowing, vibrant sentences. Such freedom must be kept within bounds, however, or the prayer become aimless to the point of marking one down as a nitwit or a sluggard.

A simple free prayer may often take its form from some passage of scripture, such as Psalm 46, Isaiah 6, Psalm 23, the story of the Transfiguration or some New Testament miracle of healing. The outline of the biblical account becomes the outline of the prayer. Because of the deep associations which these scriptural patterns awaken, this is a particularly fine form of public prayer.

Series prayers are always in order. The minister can plan his free prayer in the form of a series of thanksgiving, petitions, aspirations or confessions. Interesting, too, is the prayer in which all the glittering facets of a particular impulse or theme are revealed. The prayer aspects may be explored of such themes as Christmas, Easter, Jesus, the Church, religion, summer, nature, and so on. Lovingly the theme is examined as one would turn a diamond around in the hand to let the light fall upon its polished, sparkling surfaces.

Effective also is the prayer of contrasts. It is like a dance done by two interpreters who balance one movement against another. In this way the minister may crystallize the prayer impulse into a contrast between the goodness of God and the sinfulness of man, the providence of God and the poverty or suffering of man, the beauty of nature and the brutality of human society organized apart from God. Many such contrasts come to mind. Here is such a prayer. Because the contrasting mood is essentially poetic, the prayer becomes rich in imagery as it progresses.

Almighty God, before whose voice of judgment we can but fall upon our knees, accept our penitence, we pray. In pain and sorrow we cry to Thee for the rain of death which mankind has called down upon itself. Now we lift up our hands to Thee, earnestly beseeching Thee for a clear word. Show us what we can do. Help us to do what we can. Open our eyes to that distant vision of a world whose co-operative activity results in justice, security and peace.

Meanwhile we thank Thee for the occasional oasis of love and beauty which keeps us sane and often puts a song upon our lips. We rejoice to know that even while mankind is torn by war . . . October afternoons are still bronzed with golden autumn leaves. The birches flash white and yellow in the sunlight and the eye is quieted by sudden glimpse of pine.

In the slow splendor of this autumnal oasis we again feel at home in the world . . . and beauty comes to us, and the remembered joy of friends, and the peace of God that supports us forever. Glory be to Thy holy name. Amen.

When a minister begins to think about his prayers on the basis of these five suggestions, he has taken a step toward reality in prayer. He has begun the difficult task of making language an expression of the prayer impulse. Grateful members of his congregation will feel and often say: "You have made easy today the lifting up of my heart to God. You have put into words something I have been trying to say for weeks. This has been the house of God and the gate of heaven itself and we have all been the recipients of the divine benediction."

## Sky Above the Storm

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE

**I**N THE previous issue of RELIGION IN LIFE the article on current books dealt almost exclusively with books about the war, for these are the books which are overwhelmingly numerous now. Yet war is not the ultimate fact. Terrible and engulfing as this chaos seems, there still remain the greater facts which are not shaken. Though the wings of bombing aeroplanes darken the sky and submarines creep with their lethal menace under the surface of the sea, the clouds build their white splendor against the blue and the great stars shine at night and the fathomless ocean depths remain untroubled. Armies roll back and forth over devastated countries; but even there the invincible processes of life reassert themselves; the seed grows again in the patient earth and grain ripens and smoke goes up again from chimneys where men and women try to build their homes once more. The framework of the physical universe is too vast for even our utmost fury to destroy. And so it is also with our intellectual and spiritual life. There are great areas of wholesome and benignant interests from which we can never be finally dispossessed. After the worst convulsions, and even in the midst of them, the hunger of man will go back to the ground of simplicity and graciousness and humor and find there the bread his spirit needs.

So in this article we shall think, in part at least, of books which take us a long way from the smoke and noise of war.

The first of these is Cornelia Otis Skinner's *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, which is the story of how two young girls went on a summer trip to England in the early nineteen-twenties and of what their unsophisticated and bubbling ideas and experiences were. The pages chatter along just as the two girls might have chattered to one another, and are further enlivened by engaging illustrations. There is nothing world-shaking, nothing even important, in the whole book—and that makes it all the more pleasant; for it shows how the same sort of adventures, mishaps and surprises which anyone might have can be invested with a fresh delight.

Altogether this is a merry book to read, and the only melancholy thing about it would be if our world should despair of recapturing its mood. At the moment, it must be confessed, it seems to belong to an age that is lost—

the lost age when there were no flaming swords to keep us out of the Edens where we liked to roam, where any two girls who scraped up a few dollars could go and buy a steamship ticket, and start off debonairly for England and for France. One reads their story with a kind of nostalgic wistfulness, and with the curious incredulity which possesses us when we try to recapture the expectations of twenty years ago. Was it *real*—that opening world from which the shadow of the war of 1914-18 was supposed to have passed forever like an ugly dream, or was it a kind of Never-Never land in which we only imagine that we ever dwelt? Behind the curtain of the present terror, are there really little towns of France such as the fishing village on the coast of Normandy?—where the fishing smacks had sails of red and yellow and blue, and where “the men who manned them were the dark men of Normandy who for generations have trailed their cod nets to Newfoundland and back, those ‘Toilers of the Sea’ whose forebears watched the conquering William set forth for Albion. . . . . Beyond the *bassin* and the town, a long *jetée* terminated in the inevitable solitary lighthouse, and beyond that shimmered the sea. . . . . Along the edge of the cliffs went winding paths, worn by generations of lonely women who, of an evening, after their work was finished, would pace the high promontories, sometimes knitting a sock or crocheting a bit of lace, their eyes searching the horizon for the sight of a home-coming sail.”

It may be long before the sails of all the peaceful ships will put in again to the harbor towns of England and of France, but meanwhile we can go there in imagination on a Peter Pan journey of gaiety and amusement with the two irrepressible girls who go sparkling through this book.

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*Memories of Happy Days* is the gentle and beautiful record of a man's life and thought. There are overtones of sadness in it, for it covers the period of two wars and centers in the country which has known the bitterness of war as acutely as any other. Yet the singular fact about it is that war falls here into a perspective which makes it like a transient shadow as against something vaster and more sure. Julian Green was born of American parents in France in 1900, saw the beginning of the first World War as a boy too young at first to realize its significance—though not too young to be drawn into it as an ambulance driver before the end, came for the first time to America in 1919 to be a student for three years at the

University of Virginia, and then went back to Paris until the second World War drove him out of France.

But it is to France that in spirit he still belongs. His citizenship is American, but his heart is French. Seldom has the devotion which France can inspire been more deeply expressed than in this book, and seldom has the lure of Paris, particularly, been more subtly and potently conveyed. "As I write these words," he says, "in a New England home, with a view of the White Mountains out of the window, and the latest news of the war in the Ukraine still lurking somewhere at the back of my mind, I cannot help wondering whether I am writing my own story or someone else's, someone I have known very well and have not seen for many years. It seems so strange not to be in Paris. . . . The White Mountains are beautiful through the summer haze, and there is something very kindly about this old house I am in, with its funny little casements and its prim little chintz curtains, but no sooner have I written the name of the Boulevard Saint-Germain than I find myself walking in the shade of the familiar chestnut trees, or down some of those old streets that have seen the invader march by so many times and have so many times outlived him."

Thus the book makes a country seem beautiful and noble because of what, in spite of temporary tragedy, it deathlessly is; and because of the long glory of its remembered history that falls upon it like an unearthly light. But it is not only for its descriptions of France that *Memories of Happy Days* is good to read. Nearly all the people in it, and above all Julian Green's own family, are people whom one is glad to think of as belonging in our world. And in these times when it is one of the twisted fruits of a sour psychology to suppose that there must nearly always be a conflict between father and son, it is like a clean refreshment to read what Julian Green has written of his father: "When I was a boy, I took it for granted that all men were as honest as he was and had as great a heart; I had much to learn."

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Julian Green's book was one of the two co-winners of the 125th Anniversary Award, given by Harper and Brothers to the most distinguished of more than 750 nonfiction manuscripts submitted. The other was *I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century*, by John A. Rice.

Two more different autobiographies, in background, style and temper, it would be hard to come upon. Of the two, the first leaves a happier

taste, but it is the second that is more solid nutriment. It is—let us say so emphatically—a book of extraordinary power and importance. It reveals one whole aspect of contemporary civilization with a mastery of detail and a sweep of appraisal not often equaled.

John A. Rice was born in South Carolina, the son of a Methodist minister, shared the shifting and unstable existence of a Methodist preacher's family moved every four years from one town and one bleak, impersonal parsonage to another, went to various schools and then to Tulane University, won a Rhodes scholarship to Queen's College, Oxford, taught at the Webb School, at the University of Nebraska, at the New Jersey College for Women and at Rollins College, and then was one of the founders of the starry-eyed but soon disillusioned educational venture at Black Mountain, North Carolina. All these scenes and more, and a whole panorama of life and people associated with them, move through Mr. Rice's high-lighted pages, startling in their vividness, compelling in interest. One is usually chary of the descriptions by publishers of their own books; but when one has read this book one turns back to realize that in this instance the publishers have told the exact truth when they say as follows:

"Sharply and subtly, through a thousand revealing anecdotes, we see a society turned inside out. We are shown the plantation days and the sleepy, one-horse southern towns in the era of the so-called New South. We see the author's diversely individualistic family, the growing power of the Southern demagogues, the rise of Coca-Cola culture.

"The picture he gives of higher education in England and America is, like his memories of boyhood and youth, a searching commentary on our times—cruel and kind, tender-hearted and relentless, and lighted by a wit that moves the reader to thought as well as laughter. For John Rice, in exploring the truth about himself, his people and his native land, is always provocative, frequently charming, never dull."

In his depiction of large scenes and social trends, Mr. Rice has a penetrating sight and a mastery of the principles emerging from the facts he sees which is convincing in the highest degree. His portraits of people, too, in the way the living faces emerge from the lights and shadows, are as unforgettable as a Rembrandt canvas. Sometimes one feels that they may be as true as they are pitiless—as for example the devastating picture he draws of his uncle, "Cotton Ed" Smith, the South Carolina senator whom President Roosevelt attempted to get rid of in the unsuccessful

"purge" of three years ago. "He was an evangelical politician. The world-saving strain that ran through the family was used by him for his own ends. . . . He never had the courage completely to accept or reject anything. He was half pious and half profane, half good and half bad, half honest, half everything, half slave and half free."

But on the other hand, Mr. Rice's own father, John A. Rice, the elder, is described—though in quite different terms—in a fashion that makes him almost equally an object of scorn; and one would never guess that he was actually one of the torchbearers of courageous liberalism in the Southern Methodist Church. Somewhere deep in the author's nature there seems to be the lasting frustration of an embittered boyhood. It is a pity that this should be so, and that his judgments often seem so mordant and sardonic.

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In this article we wished to dwell, as we said at the beginning, upon books which are not about the war. But it is hardly possible to avoid that insistent theme altogether. Kay Boyle's *Primer for Combat* does deal with the war; but it deals not with the war's sensational and dramatic elements, but with an aspect of it which is woven out of the permanent and poignant realities of the lives of little people. Miss Boyle lived for nineteen years in Europe, and she understands sensitively the mind and mood of France.

The book is in the form of a journal written by "Phyl," a young American woman in the Haute-Savoie of France, at the time when the French resistance to Germany collapsed. Here one sees the confused and pitiful drama of a people's disintegration as though from within, from the day-by-day alterations of hope and courage and bitterness and disillusionment that surged through the bewildered crowds in village squares, and echoed in the little cafés and shops. "The whole structure of the nation is adrift, mastless and rudderless, and the quivering compass of a people's belief swings wildly from pole to pole." But among the people in the story—and this is the most rewarding feature of the book—are those in whom the compass needle of conviction and courage does swing back to the indestructible loyalties in the strength of which France may find her way again out of darkness into light.

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Sometimes very little things may lead to large results. Two years and a half ago a saleswoman in an Ohio store wrote to Lloyd C. Douglas and asked him whether anyone knew what happened to the robe of Christ which the Roman soldiers gambled for at the foot of the Cross. That question started Mr. Douglas to wondering and imagining, and *The Robe* is the result.

It was a small seed to grow into so significant a flowering. But the seed would not have sprouted except that it had good soil. There is a revealing comment upon Lloyd Douglas by Lloyd Douglas himself. "My father," he writes, "was a country parson, a quite old man when I first began to think and take notice. . . . .

"Father loved to tell stories and I've seen many a farmer right on the edge of a bench hanging on every word father said. There were the old Bible stories, but father thought of every one in the Bible as alive, and he made them seem alive. And if he needed to throw in a little drama to make the story even more interesting, why he threw it in.

"Well, I grew up and became a preacher and told stories, but I wanted to write. . . . ."

Technically, Mr. Douglas is not the best of writers. His style is often diffuse, and overloaded with adjectives. But, like his father, he knows how to create and to tell an absorbing story.

Christianity has been a "Magnificent Obsession" to Mr. Douglas for many years. In *The Robe* one can see the fruition of many of the ideas and emotions which found limited expression in his earlier books. The dynamic quality inherent in the sincere Christian has fascinated him, and in this latest work he has gone back to the source and written a moving story of what he believes to have been the spirit awakened in the hearts of the disciples and followers of Jesus immediately following the crucifixion and resurrection. The action, both objectively and subjectively, springs from the incident described in the Gospels in which the soldiers threw dice and cast lots for the robe which Jesus had worn.

The book is a vivid historical novel as far as its setting and many of its characters go. Its appreciation of the life-giving power to be found in Jesus is genuine and stirring. It is only when he seems to base this power less on the Christ and more on a relic that the effectiveness is diminished.



*The Russians*, by Albert Rhys Williams, is a different sort of book from those reviewed above. It is not fictional or autobiographical; it is a factual study of the great nation which holds so central a place now in the interest of the world.

From the first days of the October Revolution Mr. Williams has known Russia with intimate understanding. For thirteen years of the last twenty-five he lived there. He has seen in the immense Russian experiment possibilities which have roused his frank admiration, and so he writes by inclination as an advocate. But whether or not his judgments would be fully shared by all who consider Russia, his wealth of knowledge has made a book which should be read by all who want to be intelligent about one of the vastest forces now shaping history. "Why the Russians Fight," "The Land and the People," "Commander-in-Chief Stalin," "The Press and Radio," "Religion," "What Will Russia Do After the War?"—these are some of the titles of the twenty-two rich chapters.

In the concluding paragraph of the next to the last chapter Mr. Williams writes: "After all, the Russians are not unlike other peoples. Treat them like human beings and they respond like human beings. Live up to our obligations as partners and allies and they will do likewise. In the last analysis what the Russians do after the war depends largely on what we do during the war."

As Lincoln Colcord said in a review in the *New York Times*, "Books like this help to take us out of our insularity, and throw another light on the story we read every day in our newspapers."

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**Our Hearts Were Young and Gay.** By CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER and EMILY KIMBROUGH. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1942. pp. 247. \$2.50.

**Memories of Happy Days.** By JULIAN GREEN. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942. pp. xii-320. \$3.00.

**I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century.** By JOHN A. RICE. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942. pp. x-341. \$3.00.

**The Robe.** By LLOYD C. DOUGLAS. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942. pp. 695. \$2.75.

**Primer for Combat.** By KAY BOYLE. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1942. pp. xi-320. \$2.50.

**The Russians.** By ALBERT RHYS WILLIAMS. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943. pp. vii-248. \$2.00.

## Book Reviews

**Victorious Suffering.** By CARL A. GLOVER. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943. pp. 156. \$1.00.

Here is a book on suffering which does not add to the pangs of those who suffer as the manner and method of some on this subject is. This is no ash-bed conference of Job's comforters who, into smarting wounds, rub the salt of their theological conjectures. This is, to be sure, a book about stabbing thorns and lifted crosses. But it is a book about roses which plant petaled fragrance so near to the place of pain. It is about transfigured crosses which flame with inner incandescence. It is a book that looks at suffering and looks through it and cries exultantly "This is the victory!" As one comes to the end of its glad and radiant pages it is with Paul's reasoned verdict, "We exult in our sufferings, knowing as we do that suffering produces fortitude; fortitude, ripeness of character; and ripeness of character, hope."

The book on suffering deals with a subject older than the pyramids and as new as today's obituary list. The generations come and go, but sorrow and pain and death abide. One might say that there is nothing new to be said about human suffering. Yet, "tho old the thought and oft expressed, 'tis his at last who says it best." It is the judgment of this commentator that for our troubled day Doctor Glover has said it best. If he has, that makes the book a must for those who face suffering or deal with it. For those who tread a path strewn with the broken pieces of ruined rainbows, for those who hold in trembling hands some red cup of sorrow, for those who have pressed upon their brow some lacerating crown of thorns, this volume will come as balm and elixir.

Physicians of souls who—heeding the call, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people"—sit with Christlike pity by the side of those who moan "My God, my God, why?" will find in this book of Doctor Glover's, lanterns hung on the dark trees of every Gethsemane. They are lighted lanterns glowing with the flame of conviction, about our universe, about ourselves, about our God, which no stormy blast can blow out. We catch glimpses of the ruby lanterns carried by social pioneers who, out in the wide fields of human need, give their lives a ransom for many. Here, too, we follow the footsteps of those who with the print of the nails lose their lives in vicarious sacrifice.

Wherever Doctor Glover leads, as he surveys the fields of human experience crimson with passion flowers, high over which is "a white bird flying," one feels that his eye is all the while on that Strange Man of the Cross, of whom George Matheson, treading the winepress alone and knowing the victory of suffering, exclaimed, "O Son of Man, when I doubt of life I think of Thee!"

The book does not close without our catching a glimpse of the ransomed host who, coming up out of great tribulation and wearing white robes with crimson stitches, have passed to the painless Other Side entering into the brightness and the beauty and the bliss of the Larger Life.

These scintillating chapters could not have been written without the confidence that colors every page that "The God who knows every chilling wind, every adverse circumstance, every desolate heartache that affects His children,

enters into the human struggle." The Voice from the Cross assures us that "Those who endure exhausting punishment may take their stand at the foot of the Cross and find there the shadow of a mighty rock within a burning land, a home of peace within a wilderness of discord, a rest upon the way of suffering, refreshing waters in arid deserts of desolation, and peace, perfect peace, in life's storms."

Henry Drummond would have loved this book. Writing from his father's deathbed to a friend, Drummond said: "Trouble is not such a new thing to you. But it is to me. And I hear it saying many things. Some I never knew before; others one has heard but never believed; others one has heard often and as often forgotten." On the pages of *Victorious Suffering*, stripped of all sanctimonious platitudes, one hears Suffering say many things; some things one never knew before; others heard, but never believed; others heard often, but forgotten. This volume confirms one's faltering faith that as surely as the lowly oyster somehow transmutes an irritation into a thing of iridescent beauty, so out of tears and tragedy emerge life's pearls, as the bitter leads to the better, as weights change to wings, as the dark proves full of nightingales, and even as life's "tediums turn to life's Te Deums."

Bunyan depicted victorious suffering in *Pilgrim's Progress*. That means he found it in a dark and dismal dungeon, "Though Christian had the hard hap to meet in the valley with Apollyon, yet I must tell you that in former times men have met with angels here, have found pearls here, and have in this place found the words of life." In *Victorious Suffering*, Doctor Glover finds the angels, and the pearls, and the words of life, and, best of all, the suffering, loving God who, "stooping, shows sufficient of His light for us in the dark to rise by, and we rise."

FREDERICK BROWN HARRIS

The Foundry Church (Methodist), Washington, D. C.

**Shakespeare and the Nature of Man.** Lowell Lectures, 1942. By THEODORE SPENCER. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942. pp. xiii-233. \$2.75.

Familiar and accepted judgments frequently reveal their full meanings only when they are turned about and studied in various lights. Ben Jonson's tribute to Shakespeare, "He was not of an age, but for all time," needs such scanning. For it is no paradox to say that Shakespeare was both; perhaps he could not have been for all time if he had not also been of an age.

Shakespeare came at the end of the sixteenth century, when the tidy intellectual world of the Middle Ages was being torn apart by the skeptical mind of the Renaissance. The earth-centered universe; divinely favored man, "a little lower than the angels," but definitely high raised above the beasts; a human society of orders as fixed as the spheres of heaven—this once universally accepted system of interrelated hierarchies had been challenged, by Copernicus, by Montaigne, by Machiavelli, and it was not to endure the onset. The result was a conflict in the mind of the age, and conflict is the basis of the drama.

This was Shakespeare's heritage. He inherited also a tradition of dramatic form much more extensive than most lay readers are aware of. At the beginning of his career he wrote chronicle plays in the tradition, comedies, and an external type of tragedy. A decade of apprenticeship to the theater taught him a splendid

craftsmanship, by which he set forth age-old conceptions of the order at the heart of things, and the penalties to which are subject those who violate heaven's first law.

During this time, from sources beyond the scholar's most searching examination, Shakespeare gathered observations on the nature of man, marking the contrast between the optimistic theory of man as he ought to be and the black pessimistic tale of man as he is. In the fires of the poet's genius was forged the perfect tragic expression of the conflict between seeming good and real evil which tore the Renaissance mind. In *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, this vision of the torn mind, the divided soul, the disrupted hierarchies, is given embodiments where the individual, the local and the temporal are expanded to the typical, the universal and the eternal. And then, in the last plays, all passion's strife is ended in a reconciliation with life that is achieved without in any degree implying that the conflict was mean or purposeless. At the end we can exclaim with Miranda:

"O brave new world  
that has such people in't!"

Professor Spencer, in his exposition of the greater plays of Shakespeare, has come nearer than anyone else in our time to penetrating to the heart of this mystery of genius. It may be long before another book on this inexhaustible subject will find a way of explaining how and why the characters of the great tragedies became the profoundest searchings of the deeps of our humanity that art has created.

THOMAS H. ENGLISH

Emory University, Emory University, Georgia.

**Then and Now: the Historic Church and the Younger Churches.** By JOHN FOSTER. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942. pp. xii-182. \$1.75.

These chapters are based on lectures which had as their common theme the relation between modern Christianity in its ecumenical or missionary aspect and the historic Church. Each period is taken to illuminate the other, since the early Church was missionary and the modern younger Churches are primitive. For the older Christianity the author does not, like some others, dwell especially upon the Book of Acts, but uses the longer span of Church history. For the modern time he writes from personal experience in more than one of the mission fields of Asia and writes particularly under the inspiration of the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Madras in 1938. He is now Professor of Church History (though his chair is intended explicitly to illustrate the relation of missions and Church history) in the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England.

The scope of the book is best suggested by some of its headings: "The Ruin of the World and the Upbuilding of the Church," "The Early Church and the Younger Churches," "Emperor Worship," "The Universal Church and Religious Education," "The Church—World-Denying and World-Affirming," "Churchmanship in the Universal Church."

The volume is not so important for the information it contains, though it is stored full of striking factual illustrations. Nor are its arguments momentous, although it deals with many important problems. But the author's contagious

enthusiasm and skillful expression make up for the apparent lapses. He calls attention to the extraordinary neglect of the missionary movement in modern volumes of history, to the significance of the Church as a necessity not to be replaced by the mere existence of Christian persons, to the need for the world Church in contrast to the local and sectarian, to the perennial conflict between religion and the state, and to many other phenomena both major and minor that link the past and the present.

What he says in justification of classroom lecturing, viz., "the chance which it gives to communicate enthusiasm for a subject," really applies also to a book like this. Others will write more systematically or more prosaically, but here is a picture of the task of vital Christianity as it finds its adherents lukewarm, its ranks divided, yet "comes face to face with human nature unredeemed, with a society unleavened, pagan to the core and closed against Christ's gospel."

The present reviewer gladly endorses the words of Prof. K. S. Latourette, who supplies a preface to this American edition: "The charm of style and the breadth of learning, together with the freshness of much of the approach, should immediately commend the book to all who are concerned with the ecumenical movement and with the world-wide spread of the Christian faith." Still more is it to be commended to those who are not so "concerned" but ought to be.

HENRY J. CADBURY

Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**Personal Religion.** By DOUGLAS CLYDE MACINTOSH. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942. pp. xvi-411. \$3.00.

This is in many ways the most revealing book which Doctor Macintosh has written. In it he has opened, as it were, a window into his mature life and mind. He states quite clearly and specifically the bearing of his theological thought upon numerous aspects of personal religious living. This is the type of book which can be written only by one who has lived long and thought deeply. If one may be permitted a prediction in relation to it, it is that this will live as perhaps the most significant book produced by a prolific and thoughtful writer.

The first part of the book is concerned with the character of personal religion: with its place in human living, the theology of a "modern evangelicism," and an analysis of realism in prayer. The second part of the book is devoted to the problem of the propagation of personal religion. This is done by means of a description and evaluation of such agencies as missions, the ecumenical movement, religious education and contemporary evangelism such as is promoted by the Oxford Group Movement.

One of the more striking things about this book is its constant orientation to actual persons and movements. It is in fact an experiential study of personal religion. It begins with a description of the religious life of the family of John Cotton and the William Marvin Everett branch of the Cotton family. The daily life of the Everett branch is revealed in a paper written by William Marvin Everett himself and in the exchange of letters between two of his children, letters which are published here in some detail. These documents have historic as well as religious interest.

The same scrupulous attention to specific persons and definite activities is found in nearly every page of the second section of the book. The several agencies of propagation are examined in detail: missions, the ecumenical movement, religious education and the personal evangelism of the late Henry W. Wright and the contemporary Frank Buchman. They are examined and evaluated constantly in terms of their possible efficacy in promoting what Macintosh described in the first part of the book as "modern evangelicalism." This modern evangelicalism is, in essence, pre-Ritschlian in character. It places the religion of Jesus Christ and the God of Jesus Christ in the center rather than Jesus Himself.

Much space is devoted in the first chapter to the description of the personal religious life of the Cotton-Everett family. Whereas this may appear to be overemphasized, the fact is that Macintosh's theory of personal religion is determined primarily by the functional value of that colonial religion which pervaded so much of the life of the early Americans. The same criticism and the same justification obtain in the case of the space devoted to the Oxford Group Movement. Macintosh traces this movement back to Robert E. Speer and Henry W. Wright, and analyzes it quite fully in its present form. He is convinced that it may be the most effective method of propagating the type of personal religion presented in this volume. The author has utilized individual and group experience excellently in his analytic description of the type of personal religion to which he has devoted much of his long and significant career.

WILLIAM H. BERNHARDT

The Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado.

**Man and Society in Calamity.** By PITIRIM A. SOROKIN. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1942. pp. 352. \$3.00.

This book by Professor Sorokin should be extremely helpful to all who are seeking to get their bearings in this time of calamity. As is often the case with books which are written to establish generalizations about human behavior, much of the argument in this book may seem rather obvious. A good many pages, for example, are devoted to proving that in time of famine people think chiefly of food and in time of pestilence men seek to avoid infection. But the book is very rich in concrete examples of the way in which societies have reacted to the major calamities—famine, pestilence, revolution and war. These examples are drawn at random from many cultures and periods, and some of them are so massive in their implications that they do more than illustrate, they give great support to the author's less obvious conclusions. The sections about famine are perhaps the best. The author writes about that subject with firsthand knowledge as he lived through the famines in Russia between 1918 and 1922.

The most important conclusion to which the author comes is that these calamities invariably have a double effect upon their victims. They do lead to the brutalization or the weakening of part of the population, but they also lead to the strengthening of personal character, to new levels of heroism, to religious revivals, to the making of saints. He does not conclude from the good effects of calamities that they are to be encouraged, but he does find these good effects to be important light on their meaning. He emphasizes the conviction that in societies in which there is a relatively stable system of values only a small minority

—not more than ten per cent—of the people give in under pressure to the most antisocial temptations. On page 81 there is an extraordinarily interesting table, based in part on his own experience in Russia, of the responses that are to be expected in time of famine to temptations which range from the misuse of a ration card to cannibalism. Only one per cent are likely to succumb to the latter. "Instead of becoming cannibals, the majority share their last crumb of bread with their fellows" (p. 80). Here we see the enormous power of the moral and religious ethos in a society. Where such an ethos is vital we can count on a vast amount of decency and heroism. Sorokin concludes the book with a plea to all who are planning a new order after the war that the foundation of such an order must be in a "transcendental system of values" and "a deep sense of moral duty." Without having our values rooted in the "Kingdom of God," all the best plans may become instruments of destruction.

JOHN C. BENNETT

Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California.

**Evangelicals, Revolutionists and Idealists.** By FRANCIS JOHN McCONNELL. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942. pp. 184. \$1.50.

In this book, which contains a series of lectures delivered on the Drew Lectureship in Biography, Bishop McConnell causes "six English contributors to American thought and action" to pass before us in review.

The lecturer praises James Edwin Oglethorpe as a far-sighted colonial administrator. He denies that John Wesley's ministry in Georgia was a failure, but admits that it bore the marks of immaturity. Wesley never understood America after the outbreak of the Revolution, yet "prepared and led a religious movement for which historical events in America in the half century after 1760 prepared a continent-wide stage of action." Bishop McConnell argues that George Whitefield was a prime factor in modifying the rigid Calvinism prevalent in Colonial America. The virulent abuse heaped on Tom Paine, he suggests, was aroused not only by his violent attack on revealed religion, but also, and even more, perhaps, by his economic radicalism.

George Berkeley, who lived in Rhode Island for only three years, made no direct contribution to American thought and action, but gives Bishop McConnell an opportunity to compare Berkeley's idealistic philosophy with that of Prof. Borden Parker Bowne, his own friend and mentor in the philosophy of personalism. William Wilberforce also made no direct contribution to American thought and action, but his life illustrates many of the difficulties faced by idealists as they seek to translate ideals into action.

Bishop McConnell has a mind that is richly furnished. He is in addition a man of great common sense. These lectures, which both lecturer and auditors must have enjoyed, are valuable, not only for the biographical sketches which they contain, but also for the novel insights and the new interpretations which they offer, along with the wise reflections which the author passes on men and movements, on the world of thought and the world of affairs.

ERNEST TRICE THOMPSON

Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia.

**Religion and Health.** By SEWARD HILTNER. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943. pp. xiii-292. \$2.50.

The relation of religion and health is as old as recorded history, and the attempt on the part of ministers of religion to monopolize healing by uniting in their own persons the functions of priest and medicine man has by no means been confined to Shamanism. It was common in prescientific days, and may still be observed in sections of the world where science has not yet penetrated. With the advent of modern science the monopoly changed hands for a time, and there were many physicians who agreed to the assertion that "the difference between the veterinarian's art and that of the physician is only one of clientele," or that their ministry should be directed to "a lung named Larkin or a stomach named Stein, with a person attached." But this, like the previous monopoly, has been vigorously and intelligently assailed in favor of a twofold ministry, religious and scientific, to the patient as a person. And such a ministry requires the collaboration between physician and pastor for which *Religion and Health* is a plea.

It is not a new plea. Just one hundred years ago, Ernst von Feuchtersleben was lecturing in the University of Vienna on psychotherapeutics. His little book, *Diatetik der Seele* ("The Diatetics of the Mind"), is a classic on mental healing. In its closing pages he boldly identified *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* as *Vis Medicatrix Dei*, the Deity's creative word. But it remained for an American clergyman two generations later, Dr. Elwood Worcester, of Boston, to realize the implications of Feuchtersleben's view, and to inaugurate in the Emmanuel Movement the collaboration of physician and pastor in a joint ministry to the sick.

The Rev. Seward Hiltner begins where the Emmanuel Movement left off. He has the great advantage of familiarity with recent developments in Mental Hygiene, and with the Depth Psychology which at the turn of the century was dawning on the horizon, and he has the added advantage of wide practical experience of the actual co-operation of physicians with ministers and social workers. From 1935 to 1938 Mr. Hiltner was Executive Secretary of the Council for Clinical Training of Theological Students. Since then he has been Executive Secretary of the Commission on Religion and Health, which was established five years ago by the Federal Council of Churches.

Out of this experience of co-operation in local and regional conferences and in other ways comes a book which has explored with intelligence and discrimination the field of religion and health. The chapter on methods of pastoral counseling will be exceptionally useful to those entrusted with the cure of souls. But the book is as wide in its scope as the title indicates and should interest not only physicians, pastors and social workers, but also the general reader.

HOWARD CHANDLER ROBBINS

General Theological Seminary, New York, New York.

**Preaching From the Prophets.** By KYLE M. YATES. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942. pp. xv-225. \$2.00.

This book has a permanent value. The preacher or Bible teacher will find it useful as a manual and as a reference book. The eighteen prophets are dealt with, and the author divides his material into an outline of practical usefulness both to the preacher and the Bible teacher and student alike. There is a biography

in each case, against the political, social and religious background of the day. The preaching values of the prophet's writing and the practical lessons from his work stimulate thought and suggest sermons. This is one of the most helpful elements in the book.

Doctor Yates's book is not technical, yet it gathers together in concise form the work of Bible scholars and the opinions of the best commentators. The style is simple and homiletical. It is a most readable book.

Technical problems of higher criticism are not developed fully, such as the question of a deutero-Isaiah, or the problem of the Book of Jonah, whether it be literal history or allegory. The author seems to take the position that discussion of such problems would add nothing to the message of the book itself, with which he is objectively concerned. Beyond stating various positions held with reference to certain problems, the author confines himself to the prophet's message and the context in which it was heard.

It will have a twofold effect upon the preacher-reader. It will make him reach for paper and pencil as sermon ideas are suggested, and it will convict him of his own need of a fuller consecration if he would follow the prophets of old.

The prophets "throw light upon our own day and our own situation by announcing the eternal principles of divine providence which will always operate whenever similar conditions are present. . . . If we are guilty of the same sins we can be sure of reaping the same punishment." A study of the prophets will reveal how contemporaneous their message is!

The book impressed me with something which I had always known, but never before had felt, namely, the personal integrity of the prophets as men—their high character—and that this is one of the distinguishing marks of the prophet in any age. It is a challenge to us who covet the prophet's voice in this tolerant age in which we live.

PETER MARSHALL

New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C.

**Liberal Theology: An Appraisal.** Essays in honor of Eugene William Lyman.

Edited by DAVID E. ROBERTS and HENRY PITNEY VAN DUSEN. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942. pp. ix-285. \$2.50.

Seldom is such a distinguished company of contributors assembled in a *Festschrift*, and even less seldom in so good a cause. Professor Lyman deserves this tribute to his significance as thinker and teacher, and liberal theology needed an appraisal. Those who, through good and evil report, have kept the faith as liberal Christians and have refused to be intimidated by dogmatic but unconfirmed reports that liberalism is "bankrupt," "discredited," not to say "dead," will find their morale reinforced by nearly every one of these sixteen essays. Nobody here sneers at liberalism, or celebrates its passing, or writes it off as a deductible loss on the books of contemporary theology. Even the contributor, Rufus Jones, who quotes T. S. Eliot's dictum that "our present-day society is worm-eaten with liberalism—it is, in fact, much more worm-eaten with T-S-Eliotism—quotes it only to say that the object of the attack is merely "soft optimism," which is something quite different from liberalism, and to proceed immediately to argue that mysticism has contributed to the liberal interpretation of life. Julius Bewer shows

that the essence of liberalism is found in the Old Testament religion; Mary Lyman, that it runs through the New Testament; McGiffert, that it is the reconstructive force that counteracted the disintegration of Protestant orthodoxy; and Edward R. Hardy, Jr. (though here "methinks the lady doth protest too much"), that there is a strong strain of liberalism in Roman Catholicism. It is a long time since so many really significant scholars and thinkers representing such diverse points of view have united to do honor to liberalism. Both the word and the thing must still have a good deal of prestige, in spite of that resurgence of authoritarianism which always occurs in a period of conflict and peril.

All this, of course, implies a much deeper and truer understanding of the meaning of liberalism than those caricatures which have often been set up as straw men to be knocked down by the neo-orthodox. Liberalism is an attitude toward truth and a method of finding and testing it, not a set of doctrines. It is not to be equated with easy optimism, or naturalism, or antisupernaturalism, or naïve faith in the inevitability of progress.

A few of the definitions of liberalism offered by the contributors to this volume will make this clear. W. P. Montague says that religion is liberal "when those who hold it feel able and willing to rest the ultimate defense of their faith on reason . . . . taken not merely as abstract intellectual analysis, but as including the deliverances of one's own direct experience and that of others appraised in the light of reflection." McGiffert says: "The common denominator of all liberals is a doctrine of human nature that emphasizes human ability, freedom, dignity and worth; and a doctrine of religious knowledge, running the gamut from mysticism to scientific method, which stresses the human factor in the process of revelation." Hocking, after disposing of the theory of "natural rights" which liberals have often employed but to which liberalism is not committed as the only way of expressing its central view that "man as man has value," adds: "Liberalism at its root has been an assertion of invisible futurity embedded in the human present, together with an obligation upon each man to make himself aider and abettor of that possible future both in himself and in others as a divine destination, not as a 'pursuit of happiness' in the fields of property, pleasure and motion." Mary Lyman finds in the Synoptics and Acts "freedom from literal or legal authoritarianism, a rising above the things that bind, a seeking of the meanings of life and religion not in academic or forensic methods, but through the spirit of Christ working in the living experience of the Christian community"; and these qualities "have always been central for liberal Christian theology." Rufus Jones thinks of liberalism as "a tendency toward freedom from bigotry and unreasonable prejudice in favor of traditional opinions and established institutions." Henry Sloane Coffin puts it in one short sentence when he says, "The characteristic of a liberal is his unrestrained response to truth, wherever it encounters him."

Somewhat in contrast with these views of liberalism as a way of religious knowledge which leaves the individual free to use his own powers and throws upon him the responsibility for finding the truth by his own reason and experience supplemented by whatever revelations may commend themselves to his judgment, Hardy asserts that "the liberal's demand for an open approach to all life finds its fullest realization in the Catholic claim that all human life belongs to God, and that all good life should be at home in His church." Admirable as is the prin-

ciple that all human life belongs to God, the relevance of this proposition to the idea that Catholicism is "liberal" would seem to depend upon the arrangements which Catholicism makes for exercising centralized jurisdiction over whatever "belongs to God." Insofar as authoritative control over all that "belongs to God" is focused in a hierarchy, just so far does the inclusion of all life in that category become the prelude to, and the rationalization of, an ecclesiastical totalitarianism which is at the opposite pole from liberalism.

If it is not invidious to single out one contribution for special appreciation when all are so richly rewarding, my choice would be Van Dusen's essay on the Incarnation. With acknowledged indebtedness to William Temple's more elaborated argument, Professor Van Dusen presents a formulation which, for brevity and clarity, for cogency of reasoning and for the religiously satisfying quality of its conclusion, has no superior within my knowledge. But of course I am judging it from the standpoint of a liberal. Readers who hold that God is "utterly other" and unrelated to man except as he is related to all his creatures will part company with him at the start.

In conclusion, recognition should be given to the fine piece of work that Walter Horton has done in opening this symposium with a survey of the development of Professor Lyman's thought and the significance of his contribution to American theology.

W. E. GARRISON

The Divinity School, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

**Planning a Year's Pulpit Work.** By ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942. pp. 240. \$2.00.

My first reaction after seeing the title of this book written by Doctor Blackwood, *Planning a Year's Pulpit Work*, was that it is untimely and unpractical. To expect a pastor to plan his year's pulpit work at the beginning of the year in an age of constant change and uncertainty appeared to me to be expecting the impossible. Leaders in other areas are working from day to day, and pastors must do the same thing.

However, when I read the book and learned the approach made by the author and the divisions contained in his plan, I came to an entirely different conclusion. No book could be more timely and more practical. In fact, it is urgently needed in such an age as this.

The pattern advocated by Doctor Blackwood is one that demands initiative and originality on the part of the planner. It also makes for a rich, well-rounded, well-proportioned and well-adjusted pulpit ministry. To follow the content of the book is to avoid the tendency on the part of the pastor to spend too much time preaching in the area that is most pleasing to him. It is to avoid undue emphasis upon one area of preaching to the neglect or disadvantage of another. The recruiting preaching is undergirded and strengthened by the doctrinal preaching. The doctrinal sermons are flavored and baptized by the earnestness of the evangel. Each division is needed to make a completed whole.

If more pastors would follow the planning of their pulpit work as advocated by Doctor Blackwood, there would be less use for such descriptive terms as *misionary-minded*, *educational-minded*, *social-minded* as they apply to the pastors.

These terms become too exclusive. The ministry of the pastor would be thought of in terms of a complete well-rounded ministry.

*Planning a Year's Pulpit Work* is a book that deserves a place in the library of every pastor. It should be read and reread by every inexperienced minister and by every student in the Divinity School.

Doctor Blackwood, out of a rich experience as a pastor and a teacher, has brought forth in a scholarly way a book that will be of practical help to any person who will follow its contents.

W. W. PEELE

Bishop, Richmond Area, The Methodist Church, Richmond, Virginia.

**Poems I Remember.** By JOHN KIERAN. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1942. pp. 565. \$3.00.

That the radio program known as "Information, Please," has become an American institution in its own right is a fact not open to dispute. Thousands find the effort to "stump the experts" both diverting and stimulating. The result is that the opinions and tastes of these experts is a matter of wide general interest. It naturally follows from this that books bearing their names are certain to attract considerable attention. Franklin P. Adams' anthology of light verse, *Innocent Merriment*, was one of the most delightful offerings of the closing months of 1942. Another book which appeared earlier in the same year was *Reading I've Liked*, by Clifton Fadiman, the master of ceremonies who puts the questions to the seemingly omniscient Mr. Kieran and his colleagues.

This book by Mr. Kieran makes the third anthology from the group. In estimating the value of the poems selected for inclusion it is important that we keep in mind the title. *Poems I Remember* is not a collection of the "world's best poetry." Of these we have plenty. The reason for our remembering one poem and not another is frequently very hard to explain. The poems which any of us remember are not always the most profound and artistic specimens of verse with which we have come into contact.

Mr. Kieran's selections are for the most part the poems which we should expect to find in the repertoire of an alert-minded, cultivated man, born in the closing decade of the last century. Shakespeare is well represented, and so is Longfellow. There are sixteen poems by Robert Browning and twenty-three by Tennyson, in some instances the latter selections being excerpts from longer productions. Poems like "The Old Oaken Bucket," "Burial of Sir John More," "Casabianca" and "Marco Bozzaris" carry some of us back to those days when our old-fashioned school readers furnished us most of our literary pabulum.

Although Kipling is reasonably well represented, there is a marked dearth of recent material. Mr. Kieran says: "Nothing from any living author is included, simply because there had to be a stop somewhere. The line was drawn between the quick and the dead." Most of the material in this book would be a duplication in a library containing a fair amount of poetry. In cases in which there is a deficiency in this regard, *Poems I Remember* would be a valuable acquisition.

LEWIS H. CHRISMAN

West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, West Virginia.

**Redemption and Revelation in the Actuality of History.** By H. WHEELER ROBINSON. New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1942. pp. xlvi-320. \$3.00.

Having previously published discussions on the doctrine of man and of the Holy Spirit, Principal Robinson offers us in a final volume of a trilogy his theory of revelation and redemption. Excellent scribe "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven" that he is, he lays before us treasures both new and old. There is old material here in the sense that many parts of the work have previously appeared as articles in various books and journals, including *RELIGION IN LIFE*. Yet most of the material is new and the pattern of the whole argument is clear despite the diffuseness which results from the editorial method.

In another sense old and new treasures are presented. The dominant position, which this volume shares with others in the series, is the familiar old position of the theology of religious experience with its familiar dogmas, such as: the essential kinship of divine and human spirits, the supremacy of spiritual values, especially of the value of personality, the necessity and right of interpreting man's intuition of moral values as divine revelation, and of employing these values as tests of revelation. So Robinson repeatedly writes sentences like the following: "Man has found his highest and most influential ideas of God through the highest category of human experience, which is personality," and he interprets the prophets as men who interpreted what they knew and felt to be highest as God's word to them. The road from man to God is traced via the intuition of what is "highest and best." Yet the writer is no subjectivist. He seeks at all times to maintain the duality of the process of revelation, to mate a divine with a human initiative, divine transformation with human moral development and objective with subjective redemption.

The relatively new thing in the book is first of all the manner in which this essentially spiritualist theology is rooted in the "actuality" of history. Not only are the eternal values discovered by man in the process of history and through the mediation of historical persons, but such values must be worked out, or realized in historical acts of decision despite the fact that history does not justify itself but points to eternity and eternal values. From this point of view the incarnation takes on a significance which it lacks in many empirical theology theories. The second "new" element is the intimate manner in which the author relates revelation and redemption to each other. The content of revelation is redemption or, as the preface states the theme of the whole book: "The revelation made by the gospel is that of a redemption; the redemption does not simply consist in a revelation which influences men to live a new life; the revelation produces this (subjective) change of attitude and conduct because it reveals an (objective) redemption." This is fairly stated and the book elaborates the theme, though the objectivity in redemption lies essentially, it seems, in the objectivity of divine suffering, not in liberation from evil, since the latter is dependent on the subjective apprehension of the objective fact of God's suffering.

These elements may be called new only insofar as they have not figured largely in modern religious-experience theology. They have, of course, been of central importance for those newer movements which go under older names, such as Thomism, neo-Protestantism, neo-orthodoxy, etc. Principal Robinson's book

may be regarded in part as an effort to do justice in terms of religious-experience theology to the problems and convictions of these newer movements, which, for the rest, he dismisses with the usual charges about their "dogmatism." However, *Redemption and Revelation* does not really come to grips with the questions whose radical nature has persuaded many to abandon the method of religio-psychological and historical analysis, and Robinson's treatment does not indicate that they were mistaken. He has much to say in a late chapter about sin, yet there is here no facing up to the tragic, destructive, dynamic and demonic character of sin as it appears in the massive iniquity of our present, or for that matter the past, world. The corruption of human reason which is not a matter of dogma, but of experience, which makes men's choices of their "highest and best" dubious, which requires a revelation that denies as much as it affirms man, his reason and his history—this is scarcely brought into the picture. The problem of historical relativism that lies at the basis of so many "neo-orthodox" attempts to deal with the question of revelation is referred to once or twice but passed over with startling ease. The problem of the "Otherness" of God, not of the God of "religious" experience, but of the God of daily experience, of the Master of life and death, of the Lord of war and peace, of the Determiner of destiny, is dealt with as though it were the problem of theologians in their studies instead of that of human beings struggling for sense and meaning in life. Because one expects a writer who deals with revelation and redemption to take up such questions in a thorough way, evading no difficulties, this book leaves one less than satisfied and with the question whether the theology of religious experience is adequate. Yet one's last word about such a book must always be a word of gratitude for the many splendid insights it offers and for the ripe wisdom which appears on all its pages.

H. RICHARD NIEBUHR

The Divinity School, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

**Dr. Rudolph Bolling Teusler.** By HOWARD CHANDLER ROBBINS and CHARLES K. MACNAUGHT. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942. pp. xv-221. \$2.00.

Somewhere in Tokyo there stands magnificent St. Luke's International Medical Center, thoroughly modern and up-to-date, one of the finest hospitals in the Far East. Hidden behind the wall of enmity which hides things Japanese from American eyes, one wonders what is going on in it. Does the cross which stood high over all the vast structure as a witness to the healing ministry of the Christ still stand? Is the Christian ministry of healing still being carried on under Japanese-Christian auspices? One cannot know for sure, but of one thing it is possible to be sure, that whatever may be the attitude of Japan toward America there will be thousands of Japanese who have been brought back to health through this great medical center who will never forget that it was Christian people of good will in America who made St. Luke's possible and who will never be persuaded that American people are the dangerous evil ones that official propaganda will undoubtedly attempt to make out. And when the day of peace comes, as come it will, there will be innumerable Japanese who will rejoice that fellowship with their former friends is once again possible.

Reflections such as these lead one to an appreciation of Dr. Rudolph Bolling

Teusler, of whose dream this marvelous hospital is the fulfillment. Starting in a very inconspicuous and ill-suited Japanese frame building some forty years ago, a vigorous young American physician, missionary of the Episcopal Church of America, began his medical service to Japan. Vigorous in body and mind and resourceful beyond most men, forever discontented to work with inadequate equipment and facilities which limited the outreach of his healing ministry, he continually pushed out the boundaries of his institution until at last he had brought to completion the great St. Luke's of today.

Doctor Teusler was first of all a good physician; his skill won recognition in America and in Japan. He was a man of extraordinary resourcefulness and originality. He dared to upset tradition and to launch out in directions which a more cautious man would have hesitated to try. For example, when in founding his nurses' training school he insisted that candidates be high-school graduates—a requirement far above Japanese standards—his friends and counselors felt that he was making a great mistake; but by going ahead with his plan he succeeded in setting new standards for the entire nursing profession of the nation. And so it was in many other of his activities.

He was a man of winsome personality who knew how to win and hold the friendship of the humble and the great. He early brought to the support of his hospital some of the leading figures in Japanese political life. Likewise, in America, he succeeded in getting behind his various projects men of great wealth and influence. He was a tireless worker, interested not only in the larger plans, but in the minute details of the execution of his plans. With it all and through it all he was a great Christian and never for a moment forgot that he was the humble servant of Christ and His Church. His actual work as a physician was often interrupted, once by a period as director of the Red Cross in Siberia during World War I and often by his shuttling back and forth across the Pacific to raise funds for his hospital and the general work of the mission. The strain under which he lived finally took its toll of him and he died of heart failure just as his great dream was nearing completion. The subtitle of the book adequately and truly describes his life as *An Adventure in Christianity*.

The book is missionary biography at its best. It is a very well-written, exceedingly interesting story of a great missionary. To read it is to feel the thrill of vicarious participation in a great international movement which through hard years and successful years continues its Christlike ministry to men and to nations. The multitudes of Christian men and women engaged in it and the many institutions such as Doctor Teusler brought into being in St. Luke's International Medical Center will in the long run do vastly more than battleships and bombers in creating the kind of a world in which we would like to live.

CHARLES S. BRADEN

Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

**Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches.** By THOMAS ALBERT STAFFORD. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942. pp. 176. \$2.00.

If one is looking for a simple, clear and accurate introduction to the study of Christian symbolism, here it is. This compact and richly illustrated book does not profess to be more than an introduction to a subject of large dimensions, but it is a good introduction.

In the early centuries, the faithful used cryptic symbols to express Christian ideas and to encourage each other without betraying themselves to their enemies. In the great Gothic centuries all Europe, from Sicily to Scandinavia and from the Balkans to Britain, blossomed with rich flowerings of Christian art, all speaking the universal language of symbolism in sophisticated if unscientific fashion. The imagination of students, artists and craftsmen caught up Bible truth and Christian legend alike and portrayed them symbolically in sculptured ivory, wood and stone, in paintings and mosaics, in stained glass, metal and embroidery. Renaissance art shook itself free from the Church. The Reformation, with printing and other new-found tools of discussion and definition, lost interest in the less precise but more artistic language of symbolism and in church art in general.

It remained for the churchly and liturgical revival of a century ago to reveal again this forgotten world. Didron's *Christian Iconography*, and Neale and Webb's partial translation of Durandus led the way. Émil Mâle in his *Religious Art in France in the Thirteenth Century* (a monumental work not mentioned in Doctor Stafford's bibliography), climaxed the movement by demonstrating that the rich carvings and stained glass of medieval French cathedrals were not mere ornaments, but meaningful expressions of a once universally understood symbolism. The Lutheran, F. R. Webber, in his later *Church Symbolism* followed the Anglican Neale and the Romanist Mâle with his comprehensive work. Doctor Stafford, a Methodist, provides a helpful introduction to the subject designed particularly for members of the nonliturgical churches.

This is a useful service, both because the evangelical churches in general are becoming increasingly interested in traditional forms of church art and also because, while willing to employ significant forms, they do not wish to be swept into indiscriminate endorsement of trivial and foolish expressions of an uncritical age.

Doctor Stafford sifts the wheat from the chaff and presents in clear description with attractive illustrations an adequate number of Christian symbols traditionally employed in the church building with its furnishings and ornaments. There are crisp accounts of the symbols of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity; of the sacred monograms; of the Cross and other symbols of our Lord's suffering and death; of the evangelists and apostles and of miscellaneous Christian doctrines and ideas. There is also a chapter on the symbolism of the church building and of Christian worship as well as one on teaching symbolism. There are fifteen or more plates with a dozen clear and well-drawn illustrations on each plate, together with numerous photographs and drawings of church interiors, chancels, altars, etc.

One familiar with the history and literature of the subject will miss topics and symbols which probably lie outside the field of interest of the average churchman. The purpose of the author, however, has been well achieved, and the publishers have shown good taste in producing an attractive volume thoroughly in keeping with its subject matter.

LUTHER D. REED.

Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mt. Airy, Pennsylvania.

**The Moral Ideals of Our Civilization.** By RADOSLAV A. TSANOFF. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1942. pp. xix-636. \$5.00.

Apart from the ambiguity of the title, this is an admirable book that will plug up a hole in existing literature on the history of ethics. In recording that history Doctor Tsanoff declines to limit himself to technical philosophers. He says: "Moral reflection in our civilization has not been the monopoly of professional sages or professors of philosophy." Perhaps it is because of this insight that he has searched the works of poets and saints and social reformers, avoided the dessications of academic scholarship and produced scarcely a page that is dull in writing or uninteresting in content. Many of his pages sparkle.

For the most part he maintains the neutrality of the historian and allows his *dramatis personae* to speak for themselves (through his interpretative voice) and to criticize their predecessors and each other. Occasionally, however, he adds an incisive comment of his own, such as this: "Early in modern thought the challenge was thrown to morality which has not yet been met: the challenge that there are no basic principles of right and wrong which may not be readily brushed aside for reasons of state. Against this challenge the best conscience of Europe and America is a standing but still ineffectual reply. . . ." Doctor Tsanoff also abandons his rôle of historical neutrality to voice an occasional criticism of his own: "If man (according to the ethics of socialism) is first and foremost an economic agent, and human life merely a process of material conditions, there is no ground for the protest against social injustice." Of the experimental ethics of pragmatism he says "they must surely recognize a normal bent toward finality." A still commoner criticism is directed, among others, against the sociological method in morals: "We have to rely on reason in the end."

In the presence of so massive, meaty and useful a piece of research and exposition as this, derogatory comment may seem ungrateful. Yet there is that alluring but unfortunate title. His subject, "Our Civilization," proves to be only a part of our civilization. To be sure, the classical and Christian ideals are included: in modern times France and Spain, Italy and Russia, as well as Britain, Germany and the United States. But there is scarcely a word about the Orient.

Furthermore, even within the limited part of civilization dealt with, Doctor Tsanoff emphasizes its individual moralists and schools of ethical thought rather than its social aspects and larger contours. Seldom also does he indicate which of these thinkers and schools are microcosms of their periods, how much they have been influenced by civilization, what difference their thinking has made on civilization. As to the first part of the title, "Moral Ideals," a good many of them turn up missing: e. g., peace, freedom (other than that of the will), intelligence, work, vocation, wealth; (law and justice fare better).

Since I would not have Doctor Tsanoff omit any of his voluminous but none too many pages, I do not criticize him for these omissions. I mention them merely to point out the limits which he has set himself in writing this important book. These limits are sufficiently ample to justify all he has to say within them.

ARTHUR CUSHMAN MCGIFFERT, JR.  
Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California.

**A Week With Gandhi.** By LOUIS FISCHER. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1942. pp. 122. \$2.00.

Mr. Fischer's diary of a week spent at Sevagram with Mr. Gandhi is a welcome addition to interpretations of this amazing little man who periodically has the attention of the world centered on him and his strange doings. The personality of Mr. Gandhi is admittedly difficult for a Westerner to grasp. He has puzzled, baffled and exasperated the politicians of the West. He is quoted, reviled, revered.

Mr. Fischer has discovered Gandhi as few Westerners have been able to do. He has sensed that personal achievement in the realm of Being, self-realization and discipline, is the Indian criterion of greatness; and thus is Gandhi great. It is significant that while Mr. Jinnah, of the Muslim League, is called the Qaid-i-Azam, the great leader, Gandhi is called the Mahatma, he who is great of soul, and Bapuji, a term of affectionate address to one's father. So can Western logicians make of his statements contradictions, and of his actions confusion. The consistency of his life is apparent to the Indian—it is a consistency of personality and purpose.

Mr. Fischer's descriptions of his life in the "ashram" are enlightening and amusing. We see reflected in them the keen sense of humor of Mr. Gandhi, his wit and shrewdness, something of his luminosity—and Mr. Fischer's own keen perception and appreciation. This does not by any means mean that Mr. Fischer agrees completely with what Mr. Gandhi says or thinks. This is not a necessary concomitant to appreciation. He says that to ask Mr. Gandhi a question is to start a creative process, in the progress of which there is an amazing freshness, even to the consternation of his closest associates. He will reason a proposition, arrive at a conclusion—then suddenly, with a smile negate his own conclusion with a bit of practical wisdom. It is obvious, therefore, that no statement of his should ever be lifted from its largest context and used to delineate his position.

The record of the penetrating questions asked Mr. Gandhi, along with the conversations prompted by these questions, is really a record of the way both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Fischer approach the problems of the new India. We are not so much interested here in these discussions themselves as in the character delineation to be seen through them.

In his concluding chapter Mr. Fischer records some of his impressions of Mr. Gandhi. I quote them in part:

"Part of the pleasure of intimate intellectual contact with Gandhi is that he really opens his mind and allows the interviewer to see how the machine inside works. . . . Actually, he thinks aloud, and the entire process is for the record. This confuses some people and impels others to say he contradicts himself, or that he is a hypocrite. . . . An interview with him is a voyage of discovery, and he himself is sometimes surprised at the things he says. His secretaries, who sat with us as he spoke, were often surprised at the novelty of his assertions. That is why I learned so much from Gandhi and so much about Gandhi. He did not merely give me fact and opinions. He revealed himself. . . . This is a characteristic Gandhi cycle: he enunciates a principle, defends it, and ultimately admits that it is unworkable. His mind is malleable and fluid. . . . Gandhi has become the symbol of a nation's yearning. . . .

Gandhi may have doubts about his views on economics and sociology. He will consent to modify methods and the time-table. But he is undeviating, unyielding and uncompromising on the central issue of independence. Indians tell you Gandhi was born to achieve independence. He is ready to die for it. Sacrifice and renunciation rank very high in the Indian calendar of virtues. . . . You follow a leader who is you in a better edition. Gandhi is father and brother to millions of seminaked, half-starved, not-too-intellectual peasants and workingmen who want to attain dignity and prosperity through national effort. He is a chip of their block."

MALCOLM B. PITTS

The Kennedy School of Missions, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut.

**Our Eternal Contemporary.** By WALTER MARSHALL HORTON. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942. pp. xx-180. \$2.00.

The occasion which started the preparation of this volume was the call for a series of addresses to Christian laymen in 1938. The inspiration for its general course of thought came from the reading of Karl Heim's two books, *Jesus der Herr* and *Jesus der Weltvollender*. Professor Horton has developed his original addresses into the present volume because of his conviction that the "moratorium" on the doctrine of Christ, which has obtained in American religious thought since the first World War, ought to end. The book is both a persuasive christological statement set forth in a lucid, nontechnical style and a personal confession of Christian faith that is deeply moving in its reverence, humility and vital devotion to Jesus Christ.

An adequate doctrine of Jesus must embrace the facts of Jesus—"then and now." That is to say, it must be based upon a sound understanding and appraisal of the historic Jesus and the situation in which He lived. This is an indispensable corrective to merely subjective images about Him and to the persistent temptation to modernize Him. At the same time it must take full account of the Jesus whose spirit and movement are still transformingly alive in the world and who still confronts men with His evangel and His claim.

Such a doctrine is stated here in terms of Jesus as Leader, Saviour and Victor. In His day Jesus led men back to God for judgment and renewal and then "forward into a new age." His leadership today has the same direction and intention, "Back to God, forward to a new Christian world order." Saviourhood, however, is something more than leadership. Men who are laboring, often unconsciously, under the awful weight of alienating sin and guilt before God and their fellows need forgiveness and reconciliation if they are to have inner peace and power to go forward. In and through Jesus as Saviour, God wrought such a work of forgiveness and reconciliation. On Calvary "God's sacrificial love actually got into history, where it could reach us." In the conception of Jesus as Victor, Professor Horton makes effective use of an ancient view, recently revived by Gustav Aulen, to express the Christian eschatological outlook. The conflict against the forces of evil which Jesus waged, and "in principle" won, engenders and sustains the Christian faith "that in the end as in the beginning" this "is God's world and not the devil's." The Epilogue addressed to non-Christians is an

especially gracious and inviting approach to those who do not cherish the Christian faith, but nevertheless feel the appeal of Jesus.

The motif of the entire discussion is the presentation of Jesus as our living and eternal contemporary. While this view is a conviction "born of personal discipleship," it is one which the author believes is thoroughly warranted by the New Testament materials, has been repeatedly witnessed to by Christians through the centuries and is still vindicated in the experience of His disciples today. The entire volume breathes a vivid and impassioned faith in Jesus as the present Leader, Saviour and Victor for men who are now being overtaken and overwhelmed in the engulfing tides of enmity, frustration and war.

ROBERT WORTH FRANK

Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois.

**Personalities of the Passion.** By LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943. pp. 183. \$1.50.

A book from the pen of Leslie D. Weatherhead, one of the greatest preachers of the modern day, is always a welcome event. *Personalities of the Passion* is a book different from the others he has written; in fact, it is more in line with the type we have so frequently from the pen of American writers. This new contribution is "A devotional study of some of the characters who played a part in the drama of Christ's Passion and Resurrection." The author says, "One need not preach about the war." People ask sometimes if one does or is going to do so. They usually hope for the answer "No!" I find myself rarely doing that in the sense generally understood. But no great truth about God is irrelevant to men in great need, least of all the greatest truth of all, which shines through the drama of the Passion and Resurrection of the Saviour. Again: "It seems more fitting now than ever it was to read again the drama of the Cross, with universal sorrow all around us, in a world where ideologies are clashing and crashing, where men are drilling and daring and groaning and dying, and women are weeping and worrying and moaning and mourning; where all are looking and hoping and watching for a day of resurrection after the death of so much that was dear." Doctor Weatherhead says: "I'm writing for some with bombed homes and bombed businesses and bombed churches and bombed hearts, and perhaps a bombed faith. They are in the mood, I think, to look at the sad glory of the Cross."

He selects for consideration Peter, Judas, Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, Barabbas, Simon of Cyrene, Mary the mother of Jesus, Longinus, Dismas, Joseph of Arimathea and Cleopas of Emmaus. These are not merely conventional devotions along accepted lines, but sparkling interpretations of Jesus as well as His associates. As one reads there will be radical disagreements of the portrayal of certain characters, especially that of Peter, Judas, Barabbas and Dismas, but all will be arrested in their thinking by his words. Regarding Judas, he has a brilliant exposition of an old but not generally accepted idea. Imagination is a valuable necessity in good preaching, but it is strained almost to breaking when he makes the thief, Dismas, a schoolmate of Jesus. It appears that he puts a much heavier demand upon Joseph of Arimathea than he does upon those who were intimately associated with Jesus. The message on Simon of Cyrene is a real classic, and to me by far the best in the series.

Whether one agrees in whole or in part, Doctor Weatherhead has clearly demonstrated that there is great preaching value for the modern day in the lives of those who had a part in those last days leading to the Cross.

W. ANGIE SMITH

First Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas.

**The Screwtape Letters.** By CLIVE STAPLES LEWIS. New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Geoffrey Bles Ltd. (The Centenary Press); Toronto, Canada: S. J. Reginald Saunders, 1943. pp. 160. \$1.50.

The ways of the human mind are very curious. Lord Macauley writing of Congreve's impotent defense against the onslaught of Jeremy Collier makes the observation: "Strange that a man of such parts should, in order to defend himself against imputations which nobody could regard as important, tell untruths which it was certain that nobody would believe." In *The Screwtape Letters* a shrewd old devil uses all the strange ways of the human mind as a basis for a philosophy of effective temptation. He is instructing a not very shrewd young devil, and as you follow his letters you witness the struggle of the powers of evil for a particular human soul. But Screwtape is too clever by half and he only succeeds in creating an inverted argument for everything that he hates and against everything that he loves. So you have a kind of brief Christian apologetic constructed unwillingly by a devil who sees everything upside down.

C. S. Lewis has sent his voice forth from the very Oxford College which was the residence of Addison for ten years. Like Addison, he has "the glory of showing that the most brilliant wit may be the ally of virtue" and of God. Mr. Lewis' book, *The Problem of Pain*, is probably the most satisfactory treatment of that baffling subject written in our time. His recent addresses on religion sent out by the British Broadcasting Corporation have won a wide and profoundly favorable response.

Some British critics have gone so far as to claim that *The Screwtape Letters* will take their place with the allegories of John Bunyan.

Few men can read these little masterpieces without searchings of mind and heart. Screwtape has all the advantages of the Oxford urbanity. And thus he writes: "But are you not being a trifle naïf? It sounds as if you supposed that argument was the way to keep him out of the Enemy's (God's) clutches. That might have been so if he had lived a few centuries earlier. At that time the humans still knew pretty well when a thing was proved and when it was not; and if it was proved they really believed it. They still connected thinking with doing and were prepared to alter their way of life as the result of a chain of reasoning. But what with the weekly press and other such weapons we have largely altered that. Your man has been accustomed ever since he was a boy to have a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn't think of doctrines as primarily 'true' or 'false,' but as 'academic' or 'practical,' 'outworn' or 'contemporary,' 'conventional' or 'ruthless.' Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church. Don't waste time trying to make him think that materialism is *true*. Make him think it is strong, or stark, or courageous—that it is the philosophy of the future. That's the sort of thing he cares about."

Often Screwtape cuts very deeply as when he discusses our illusions about what constitutes realistic thinking: "Your patient, properly handled, will have no difficulty in regarding his emotions at the sight of human entrails as a revelation of reality and his emotion at the sight of happy children or fair weather as mere sentiment." Again: "To be greatly and effectively wicked a man needs some virtue. What would Attila have been without his courage, or Shylock without self-denial as regards the flesh?"

Screwtape is always baffled as he faces the deeper realities of life: "The truth is that the Enemy, having oddly destined these mere animals to life in his own eternal world, has guarded them pretty effectively from the danger of feeling at home anywhere else."

There is a wealth of inverted wisdom in the following observations: "And since we cannot deceive the whole human race all the time, it is most important thus to cut off every generation from all the others; for where learning makes a free commerce between the ages there is always the danger that the characteristic errors of one may be corrected by the characteristic truths of another. But thanks be to our Father (the Devil) and the historical point of view, great scholars are now as little nourished by the past as the most ignorant mechanic who holds that 'history is bunk.'"

We have room for one more quotation: "Only today I found a passage in a Christian writer where he recommends his own version of Christianity—on the ground that 'only such a faith can outlast the death of old cultures and the birth of new civilizations.' You see the little rift? 'Believe this, not because it is true, but for some other reason.' That's the game."

There are dark moments as one reads this book when he suspects that it might be a good thing if some uncritical theologians could go to Hell to study theology.

The immediate appeal of the book to thoughtful men is masterful and convincing.

**LYNN HAROLD HOUGH**

Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey.

**Revelation and Reason (Offenbarung und Vernunft).** By EMIL BRUNNER. Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1941. pp. vii-429.

A new book by Professor Emil Brunner is an event. No continental theologian is more sure of a welcome from an American audience. He has lived among us for more years than one, first as a graduate student at the Union Theological Seminary, then as a teacher at Princeton. He knows us well. We have come to know and trust him. It is no secret that just before his return to Switzerland at the outbreak of the war, he received a call from Princeton University to a chair which would have enabled him to give his life to the work which lies closest to his heart, bridging the gap between the Christian Gospel and the cultural life of our time.

It is this subject to which the present work is devoted. No theologian could have had a better training for the task which he has set himself. There is no one of the major currents which play upon the Church of today of which Professor Brunner has not had firsthand knowledge and which has not left some trace

on the substance of his theology. At Union he studied under liberal theologians and made the acquaintance of the social gospel. Later he met Karl Barth, a contact which left a deep impress, not only upon his thinking but upon his character. Still later he came under the influence of the Group Movement and received the impulse to personal evangelism which has ever since remained a dominant characteristic. Most recently he has been drawn into the Ecumenical Movement and has been one of the most useful contributors to that most far-reaching enterprise of co-operative thinking.

But through all the differing phases of his many-sided career, this interest has remained central, "How can I, a minister of the Gospel, interpret this to me priceless gift to the thoughtful men of my generation to whom Christ has become a stranger."

In this book he gathers up in its most mature form the answer to which his ripened experience has led him. In spite of the clarity of the style—and no theologian of our time leaves one less in doubt as to his meaning—the book is not easy reading. Its 429 pages traverse every phase of the subject which he has set himself and for good measure he has furnished the text with copious footnotes.

Even so, he tells, he has not exhausted his theme. For the question he puts is not what is the substance of the gospel, but how has it come to us, and how can we be sure of it now that it is here. It goes without saying that this separation of soul and body cannot be carried through consistently. The soul slips in, or perhaps we should say, shines through in many illuminating ways. One cannot help regretting, however, that even if it meant giving up the chance to write another book, the author had put all that he had to say about the content of the gospel in the present volume.

But that is not the way theologians write. They must analyze and classify and divide. Like all specialists, the theologian uses many words to say very simple things and when he must choose between technical and familiar terms is apt to choose the former. Professor Brunner is no exception. Of all continental theologians he sees most clearly that the theologian's business is not with anything recondite or profound but with the elementary truths which are the concern of every sincere Christian. But even he cannot resist the temptation to bring to the discussion of the themes of which he writes the learned apparatus of the specialist.

He has a good reason for doing this. For the audience which he has primarily in view is a continental audience and especially his colleagues of the guild whose co-operation he is anxious to win for the Ecumenical Movement. To them he must talk in their own language and we who appreciate the greatness of the issues at stake can only wish him success.

At the same time it must be confessed that this particular way of putting his case presents an obstacle to an American audience. This is a pity, for what he has to say is very important for all of us. One could wish that he might have said it in fewer words and in a context more relevant to the situation in which we find ourselves on this side of the water.

This is my excuse for the present article. As one who believes profoundly that what Brunner has to say is important, not only for a continental but also for an American audience, I crave his permission for trying to say in my own words what I believe is the heart of his message in this book.

What he has to say is in substance this: that the chief reason why our Chris-

tian gospel still remains an unknown country to many of the most thoughtful of our contemporaries is our failure to make clear to them, indeed often to perceive ourselves, what the gospel is and how it comes to us. They assume, and we have encouraged them in the assumption, that the gospel is a set of beliefs, a creed, proposed for acceptance to the mind, hence either to be tested by reason, or where reason breaks down, unquestioningly to be received on authority, but whether understood or not, belief nonetheless, having its primary reference to the mind. Even when the will comes in, as it must, when we accept a belief on authority, it is still belief which is accepted, if not our personal belief, still the belief of the Church which we make our own by the submission of our will.

But the gospel, Professor Brunner reminds us, is not primarily belief at all. Revelation, he tells us, is "impartation of life" (p. 29). It is the creation in us of new life in God into which we enter by an act of trust which initiates us into a new personal relationship. It involves belief indeed since man is a single personality with mind and affections as well as will, and when his life center has been changed everything about him changes also, his thoughts as well as his feelings and his acts. Here the mind comes in. The man whose life has been changed wants to tell other people about what has happened to him and for this he must use words. So the Gospel acquires its secondary meaning of good news. It is the story of the change that has taken place in the life of man because of what God has done.

For this we must call upon reason to help. For reason is the instrument which God has given man to make clear to the mind the significance of what is happening to him. But the place of reason is secondary, not primary. Theologians in the past have often failed to see this. They have put reason first as though it were our primary way of learning about God, and revelation has come in afterwards to supplement the inadequacy of this primary revelation. This explains why many theological books treat first of Reason then of Revelation. Professor Brunner believes that this order is wrong. We should begin at the other end, so he calls his book *Revelation and Reason*.

We need not follow the author in his account of the way in which this fateful change has come about. It is enough to say that it began early, that it crystallized into its present form in the scholastic theology of the Middle Ages, that in spite of a brief interlude at the Reformation when the original meaning of the gospel as a new life brought about by a change of personal relationship was recovered Protestant theology soon shifted back to the pattern set by its Catholic predecessors. When the criticism of the Renaissance discredited the old view of the supernatural it was only to raise reason to a still higher pedestal as the only organ of knowledge, a position which it still for the most part holds, in the intellectual life of our day.

All this, Professor Brunner assures us, is a fundamental misconception of the gospel as it is presented to us in the Bible and as it is verified in the experience of sincere believers. We must break once and for all with this intellectualistic conception of revelation. And we must do this in the interest of reason itself. For reason has its rights and as a scholar Professor Brunner is very jealous for them. When revelation has been vouchsafed us, when the radical change in our relation to God has taken place, when we are living the life of faith, then reason contemplating what has happened will find a new meaning in life. Then and then

only will we be able to perceive order and unity succeeding the chaos which have preceded them.

This central conviction determines Professor Brunner's treatment in his book. In the first half of the book he discusses the nature of revelation, in the second half its truth.

The first part expands the thesis which I have attempted briefly to summarize, and draws certain conclusions therefrom; this first: that God has always been revealing himself and this not in word primarily but in deed. He has revealed Himself in nature. He has revealed Himself in history, not in specific events merely, but in the whole course of history itself. He has revealed Himself in the lives of individual men and women. He has revealed Himself most clearly and as Professor Brunner believes finally in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this initial revelation is only the beginning of a continuing process which is going on today. The Bible has its significance for the Church not only because it tells the story of the initial revelation but also because by its appeal to the heart and conscience of the individual it is the source of new and continuing revelation. This ongoing revelation is mediated through the Church, the company of men and women in whom the new life in Christ has begun and who are living in the new relation to God which trust in him has made possible. The organ of this continuing revelation is God's Holy Spirit. It will not be complete here but awaits its full consummation in the life of the world to come.

The next point to notice is that the process of self-revelation is a many-sided process. It takes place in all sorts of different ways and no single formulation is complete enough to include all of it. But however it takes place it is always the same God who reveals Himself, the Trinitarian God, Father, Son and Spirit, who has now made Himself known to us through Jesus Christ.

For the Trinity itself, we must never forget, is not a doctrine imposed ready-made upon the mind from which we depart at our peril on pain of heresy. It is the way God is making himself known in the many-sided processes of self-revelation by act. It is the formula through which the mind finds it convenient to sum up all that the heart and will have experienced of the justice, of the wisdom and of the love of God.

With this insight a whole nest of theological puzzles are swept away. The conception of an inerrant Bible in the sense of one which includes no scientific mistake is seen to be meaningless. The only way in which the claim of the Bible to be God's word can be vindicated is its ability through the ages to bring about that change of relation to God which is of the essence of faith. The age-long debate as to the relation of nature and the supernatural is also shown to rest on a fundamental misconception. All revelation so far as it is revelation, whether in nature, or history, or in the spirit of man, is supernatural, since it is the personal self-communication of the triune God. All revelation is reasonable in the sense that now that it is here it makes it possible for us to see clearly much that before was dark. There is no doubt a difference in the ways in which God reveals Himself, namely, between the new creative acts which meet us in history, and in human life and which initiate new chapters in the history of individuals and of the race and the continuing processes through which order is assured and progress made possible. But this is not the contrast between nature and the super-

natural. Rather between two ways in which the transcendent God makes his presence known in a world of law.

Into the second part of the book which deals with the truth of revelation there is not space to enter here. In this section Professor Brunner deals with a number of different subjects, the relation of faith in revelation to the experience of doubt; the bearing of the Christian view of revelation upon the claim to revelation made by the historic religions; the relation of Biblical faith to historical criticism; the proof of the being of God, and the like. On all these points Professor Brunner has much that is helpful to say. From all that he writes there is much to be learned. But it must be left to the reader, when the book is made accessible in English, to read what Professor Brunner has to say for himself. Only this word concerning the conclusion in which the long discussion culminates. This is the author's conviction that in spite of all the difficulties in the way a Christian philosophy in the sense of a rational interpretation of the universe which is based upon the Christian experience of faith is possible. So the book ends with a vindication of the right of reason to a place side by side with faith as God's way of speaking to man.

So far I have written as interpreter. Will Professor Brunner permit an old friend and teacher for a moment to assume the role of critic, and to pass on to him some questions which have been raised in my mind by the reading of his book?

The first has to do with the sense in which God is free. Here the reviewer seems to detect some trace of Professor Brunner's former Barthianism which unless qualified might lead him to an underestimate of one important aspect of Christian truth. It is true, as Professor Brunner writes, that it is God's royal prerogative to love us "without any reason just because he will, just as it was his will to create us" (p. 35). This Lordship, he goes on, stands in intimate connection with what the Bible calls God's Holiness. As the Holy One God is the wholly Other, the incomparable, the unique whom we recognize and who desires to be recognized as incomparable (p. 46).

There is a profound truth in this affirmation of the uniqueness of God. From our point of view as human beings, God's dealing with us must ever remain an unfathomable mystery. But from God's point of view we dare not regard his action as wholly arbitrary. For this would make God a completely irresponsible tyrant. It is the supreme glory of God that in all that he does he is responsible to an inner law in his own nature. Were this not so he would not deserve our worship.

This is not modern liberalism. It is only to say over again what Calvin said four hundred years ago when on being reproached for teaching a doctrine of divine arbitrariness he repelled with indignation the charge that he shared the profane error of the Scotists who attributed no law to God but that of his own irresponsible will.

A second point on which the critic finds himself raising questions is in connection with Professor Brunner's interpretation of sin. To Brunner the sin of sins is pride and under this term he is inclined to subsume all that the theologians understand as original sin. Pride is indeed a great sin, one of the greatest. It is peculiarly the scholar's sin, for it leads him to trust his own reason in the face of the ultimate mystery. But pride is not the only sin, or even the most com-

mon. It may not even be the worst. There is another sin which the Bible recognizes as equally fatal, and that is cowardice. "Wherefore criest thou unto me? saith the Lord. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." (Exodus 14:15). It is this self-distrust, unwillingness to face the responsibilities which God lays upon us which leads us to shift to the shoulders of others the decision which God would have us make ourselves. It is such moral cowardice born of our fears on which all authoritarians build, whether in Church or in State. God who would have us repent of our pride bids us also to repent of our fear.

One final query has to do with Professor Brunner's attitude toward security. It is the desire for security, he tells us, which has been one of the major causes of our present misfortunes. It is this that leads us to put our trust in reason with its promise of a demonstration that can be given once for all, whereas a certainty of this kind is not meant for us, at least not here.

This is true, but it is not all the truth. We are not wrong in desiring security, only in trying to find it in the wrong way. The life into which the gospel introduces us is not a life of insecurity relieved by occasional flashes of hope. It is a life from which all fear has been banished because we have met one who is strong enough to keep us safe when we are weak, wise enough to guide us aright when we are ignorant, and loving enough to hold us fast even when we would let Him go. This security, the one certain basis of one's peace is the gift of the gospel. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Such security the Gospel promises." To proclaim this security as God's supreme gift to a storm-tossed world is the highest office of the Christian whether he be theologian or layman.

But I would not end on a note of criticism. These are minor points and are due rather to difference of emphasis than of fundamental conviction. The heartening thing is to have from this distinguished theologian so clear cut a witness to the central truth of the gospel that God makes Himself known to us by deed rather than by word, and that His revelation of redemptive love is as wide as humanity and is always Christlike.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN

Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York.

**The Harvest of the Spirit.** By EUGENE M. AUSTIN. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943. pp. 169. \$1.50.

One of the stimulating experiences of life is to discover in some sudden, unlooked-for fashion a new vision or a new voice. Many will recall, and in some degree may share, the mood of Keats "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer": "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies When a new planet swims into his ken." Such reflections are stirred by what the Abingdon-Cokesbury Press is doing in its recent publications. The old luminaries who still "utter forth a glorious voice" have not been forgotten. But some of those are fading out, and if the heavens are to go on sparkling, new stars must appear. Hence the emergence in this publisher's list of men with whose names the reading public has yet to become familiar.

An example is found in the Rev. Eugene M. Austin, a man in the middle

thirties, now in the second pastorate of his brief ministry—the Tioga Baptist Church in Philadelphia. Under the title, *The Harvest of the Spirit*, he has put together what are obviously sermons gleaned from his own ministry. He quite plainly has the preaching gift. In the combination of the sound scholarship of a highly educated man with the passion of a prophet, he reminds one of Weatherhead. He unites scholarly poise with popular and evangelistic appeal. He has an unforced and direct style of speech, almost colloquial at times, in accord with the old definition of good preaching as "dignified conversation."

He is free from pedantic and technical terms, uses the language of the people, and draws his illustrations from everyday life and current incidents, illuminated and enriched by biblical quotation and teaching. He belongs to the school of Frederick W. Robertson, who is one of his chief admirations, in translating Bible situations into modern thought and modern prose.

In a word, here is a fresh and unconventional approach to the problems of religion, which will attract alike the common and the uncommon man (*e. g.*, "Blessed Are the Debonair"). These sermons do not smell of the lamp, but bring with them the atmosphere of the street. They are easy reading, and I am sure were easy hearing.

Mr. Austin's own theory of sermonizing is aptly set forth in the "Sermon for Valley-Dwellers."

"I wish we preachers could remember that when we stand up to preach to our people. We tell them to hitch their wagon to a star, when we know perfectly well that wagons were made to rumble along roads. We talk about 'mountaintop experiences,' and lose sight of the fact that most of them don't get a trip to the mountains more than once in ten years! We forget, I say, that most of our people live in the valley. They work there, they love there, they suffer there, and at last they die there. And if we preachers are to bring the message of Christ down off the mountaintops and into the valley where the people live, then we'd better get back to our people—and their God!"

"So let's be intensely practical and leave out all the talk about stars and mountaintops and high aspirations, and stay close to the simple valley talk that all of us can understand. There must be no hyperbole, no flowery figures of speech—just some quiet talk about the valleys in which we spend our lives."

A genial humor and an unconquerable optimism help this preacher to keep his balance even while he enters with keen and unaffected sympathy into the woes and fears of his fellow men. Comradeship with God, buoyancy, inner security and peace, dauntless allegiance—these are the headlines of his thought. "A Trinity of Suffocation," "Trade Winds of the Spirit," "Is Christianity a Gospel of Success?" are some of his suggestive titles. A good book for preachers—and for laymen.

**HERBERT WELCH**

Bishop of The Methodist Church, New York, New York.

**A Chain of Prayer Across the Ages.** By SELINA FITZHERBERT FOX. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1943. pp. xxviii-320. \$2.00.

A more worthy edition of that incomparable volume, *A Chain of Prayer Across the Ages*, has long been needed. It has come at last, in the new American edition. Was it not Napoleon who said to his soldiers, as they faced the pyramids in Egypt, "Forty centuries look down upon you"? In this volume forty centuries

of devotions not only look down upon us, but are at our command for constant inspiration! This American edition has a happy introduction by the Right Rev. Ernest Milmore Stires, a helpful note on Ancient Liturgies, and many new prayers, together with the features and content that have made this the most valuable collection of prayers ever published.

It is said that a monk hungering for the secret of Father Lawrence's *Practice of the Presence of God* watched one night to see what was happening in his devotions. After long reading, before blowing out the candle, he made only this simple prayer, "Dear Lord, we part on the same old terms." This is suggestive of a somewhat similar prayer by a seventeenth-century general, found in this volume as a morning devotion. It goes:

"O Lord, Thou knowest how busy we must be this day; if we forget Thee, do not Thou forget us; for Christ's sake. Amen."

Another brief and very ancient prayer for both day and night is given in these words:

"Save us while waking and defend us while sleeping, that when we awake we may watch with Christ, and when we sleep we may rest in peace."

The bulk of the prayers are from the ancient liturgies, but they are brought down to our own day. There are included prayers for the Christian Year, Evening Devotions, Children, Civil Service, and other occasions, not omitting the Royal Air Force. It would have seemed as if an American edition might have included all men in air. For that, no better selection could have been made than Harry Webb Farrington's prayer, to be found in the Methodist Hymnal, the first stanza of which is:

O God, Creator, in whose hand  
The rolling planets lie,  
Give skill to those who now command  
The ships that brave the sky.

This priceless volume is valuable for what it suggests as well as for the treasures it contains. Its constant use could hardly do less than bring one to that peace for which St. Augustine prayed, "the peace of the Sabbath, which hath no evening."

FRED WINSLOW ADAMS

Copley Methodist Church, Boston, Massachusetts.

**The Great Learning and the Mean-in-Action.** Translated from the Chinese by E. R. Hughes. Dutton. \$2.00. Chinese classics from the past which speak calmly but pertinently for today.

**I Married a Minister.** Edited by Mrs. Jesse Bader. Abingdon-Cokesbury. \$1.50. Eighteen ministers' wives speak their piece!

**The Lord's Prayer.** By Clarence E. Macartney. Revell. \$1.00. An interpretation of the universal prayer of the Christian faith.

**A Permanent United Nations.** By Amos J. Peaslee. Putnam. \$1.50. A thoughtful work on postwar organization.

**Christian Answers to War Questions.** By Hampton Adams. Revell. \$1.00. A discussion of questions most persistently asked of ministers regarding the present conflict.

**The Cross and Great Living.** By W. E. Phifer, Jr. Abingdon-Cokesbury. \$1.50. Sermons that point to eternal life via *THE* Cross, despite life's crosses.

**The Story of the Bible People.** By Muriel S. Curtis. Macmillan. \$1.75. Bible tales from Moses to Christ, illustrated and written for youthful consumption.

**Shining Rain.** By Helen Welshimer. Dutton. \$2.00. Poems of courage and hope in a world of sorrow.

**The Parables.** With drawings by Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge. Harper. \$2.50. The beauty of the King James version of the parables of Jesus is enhanced by the understanding and appreciative work of a true artist.

**The Marks of Jesus.** By Raymond Calkins. Whittemore Associates. 65c. Ten telling sermons for children, on the earthly experiences of Jesus.

**The Broad Horizon.** By Patience Strong. Dutton. 50c. Verse along the line of *Quiet Corner* and *Golden Rain*.

**Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism.** By D. C. Holton. University of Chicago Press. \$2.00. A revealing study of Japan's religion of conquest.

**The Five Books of Moses.** By Oswald T. Allis. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. \$3.00. A re-examination of the modern views concerning the Pentateuch.

**The Burning Heart.** By Maitland Alexander. Revell. \$1.50. Sermons of the late Dr. Alexander who proved in life and work that it is possible for a preacher to be at once "Biblical, evangelical, Cross-centered, personal yet popular, influential and a winner of souls."

**Six Kings of the American Pulpit.** By Clarence E. Macartney. Westminster. \$1.50. Whitefield, Simpson, Beecher, Brooks, Talmage, Bryan—great preachers all—in vivid and compelling biography.

**Outlook Pamphlets on Latin America.** Friendship Press. 25 cents each. These pamphlets cover briefly and concisely the economic, social and racial problems with respect to the Church in the Western Republics, Brazil, the River Plate region, Mexico and the West Indies.

**A Warrior Lawyer.** By Frank M. Lowe, Jr. Revell. \$2.00. Memoirs of a father: country editor, criminal lawyer, world traveler and Christian teacher.